

Coloma Charter Township

History

Coloma Township is a relatively new municipality in the history of Berrien County. Until 1917, the land that is now Coloma Township was the eastern half of Watervliet Township. At the October 1917 session, A. W. Baker, supervisor, proposed that Watervliet Township be divided, providing the citizens on the eastern side access to a government that could better serve their needs.

Prior to the formation of Coloma Township, the area was best known for its plentiful supply of timber. Prosperous sawmills encouraged the formation of the early village of Shingle Diggings, which was followed by the start of the cities of Coloma and Watervliet.

As the twentieth century approached, the tourism trade exploded. No longer was the cash crop logs or apples, but rather vacationers. Tens of thousands of tourists came to Berrien County every summer on steamers, such as those from the Graham & Morton Ship Company, that could accommodate up to 2,000 people. By 1927, a businessman by the name of George E. Klotter had amassed over 700 acres along the southwest end of Paw Paw Lake. His goal was to develop his dream of a "City of Islands," which would take five years and over \$150,000 to complete. It was the largest development undertaking in Michigan to that time and was so huge that trade journals kept the nation up to date on its progress. Klotter's dream was never realized due to a combination of engineering problems, Mother Nature and the 1929 stock market crash. Instead of completing Wil-O-Paw Islands, Klotter built and ran the bar/restaurant, Wil-O-Paw, until its sale in 1947.

Several pavilions were established on the shores of Paw Paw Lake during the Big Band Era of the 1930's and 40's, bringing such entertainers as Perry Como and Doris Day to Coloma Township. The Crystal Palace was a landmark that is still remembered today by those who danced within its walls. Its destruction by fire in 1965 brought the day of the resort pavilion at Paw Paw Lake to an end.

The Great Depression and World War II both took a toll on Coloma Township's tourism trade. Land and buildings were often forfeited to the government due to delinquent taxes. Later, gas rationing deterred vacationers, and building materials became so scarce that new development came to a halt. Though the boom in tourism slowed dramatically, today the Township continues to serve vacationers well.

Observations

Coloma Charter Township is located in the northern portion of Berrien County. Paw Paw Lake, which is shared with Watervliet Township, is one of the main attractions in the area. The Township has become a popular area for vacationers and second homeowners. During the hot summer months the population almost triples around Paw Paw Lake. Although Coloma Charter Township is highly residential there are still many lots available for either residential use or light industrial development. The community has a good police, ambulance and fire department and has been very supportive of its school system. The community spirit, the location, and the services provided, make Coloma Charter Township an attractive location for both residents and businesses.

Community Vision

- Attract more light industrial entrepreneurs.
- Maintain the status quo of a resort type, bedroom community.
- Encourage retailers to set up shop in the lake area.

All Demographic Information is based upon the 2009 Census Estimate

Population

| | | |
|----------------------|-------|-----------------|
| 1980 Census | 5,345 | |
| 1990 Census | 5,123 | 4.15 % decline |
| 2000 Census | 5,217 | 2.81 % increase |
| 2009 Census Estimate | 5,105 | 2.15 % decline |

Personal Income

| | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Median Family | \$53,542.00 |
| Average per Capita | \$21,507.00 |
| Median Household | \$42,591.00 |

Labor Force

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Total Work Force | 2,824 |
| Employed | 2,544 |
| Unemployment Rate | 9.4 % |

Principal Economic Base Employers - Manufacturing

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Coloma Community Schools | 255 Employees |
| DeGroot Inc. | 39 Permanent/85 Seasonal |
| Maximum Mold | 17 Employees |

Housing

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Number of Dwellings | 2,357 |
| Owner Occupied | 1,500 |
| Renter Occupied | 325 |
| Median Rent | \$593 |
| Median Home Value | \$130,900 |

Building Permits - 2010

| | Number Issued | Dollar Amount |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Residential | 9 | \$1,677,000.00 |
| Commercial | 3 | \$185,000.00 |
| Other | 90 | \$1,078,759.00 |
| Total | 102 | \$2,940,759.00 |



Historical Photo of Shingle Diggings

Government

Municipal Hall

Coloma Charter Township Hall
4919 Paw Paw Lake Road
Coloma, MI 49038

Phone: (269) 468-7212
Fax: (269) 468-6503
Website: www.colomatownship.org

Council Meetings

Second Wednesday of Each Month
Start: 7:30 p.m.

County Commissioner

Robert Wooley (District 1)
P.O. Box 324
Coloma MI 49038
Phone: (269) 468-7329
nbsc@l2k.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

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, 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

Coloma Charter Township is served by the following school district:

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: Robert Cottier
Phone: (269) 468-8291
Sworn Officers – Full Time: 8
Sworn Officers – Part Time: 3
Number of Cars: 6

Fire

North Berrien Fire Rescue
Fire Chief: Randy Morris
Phone: (269) 468-4412
Number of Stations: 1
Part-Time Paid: 30
Insurance Rate Class: 5

Trash Collection

Reliable Disposal
Phone: (800) 677-1083
Type: Independent
Pick Up Day: Tuesday

Best Way Disposal, Inc.
Phone: (269) 463-3232
Type: Independent
Pick Up Day: Monday

Recycling

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

Water

Public Works Department (City of Coloma)
Phone: (269) 468-6232
Source: Private Wells
Note: Municipal water system is being extended from the City of Coloma to certain areas of the Township.

Sewer

Paw Paw Lake Waste Water Plant
(Through the City of Coloma)
Phone: (269) 468-7888
System Type: Biological Trickling Filter
Capacity: 3,000,000 GPD (Excess Capacity: 1,700,000)

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 | 0.7027 |
| Special Voted | 6.1953 |
| Subtotal | 14.3557 |

School Taxes (Berrien RESA)

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| State Education Tax | 6.0000 |
| Non-Homestead (Business) | 18.0000 |
| Extra Voted Building & Site | 0.0000 |
| Debt Retirement | 1.4000 |

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Berrien RESA | 0.1745 |
| Special Education | 2.1954 |
| Subtotals | |

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Homestead | 9.7699 |
| Non-Homestead (Business) | 27.7699 |



Paw Paw Lake

Economic Development

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

North Berrien Community Development
 Chana Kniebes, Community Development Coordinator
 P.O. Box 1028
 Coloma, Mi 49038
 Phone: (269) 468-4430



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 | |



Historical Photo of the Crystal Palace Ballroom, 1925

