

# Village of Three Oaks

## History

The first settler arrived in what was to become the Village of Three Oaks in 1835. The area was covered in dense forest which settlers cleared by hand. Five years later, the first school house was built and construction of the first sawmill soon followed. In 1848, land was cleared for a railroad. The founder of Three Oaks, Henry Chamberlain, and his partner Joseph Ames built the first store in 1854. The Village was incorporated in 1867.

Although the Three Oaks area experienced healthy growth, it wasn't until 1883 that industry became an important part of the city. One Three Oaks store owner, Edward K. Warren, often had customers who complained about being jabbed by broken corset stays. While on a buying trip to a Chicago feather duster factory, he noticed large quantities of turkey feathers being burned as a waste product. Upon inquiry, Warren learned these were wing feathers that were too stiff for use in feather dusters. He had the idea of using the feather quills for corset stays and, subsequently, invented the featherbone. Featherbone was made by stripping the feather to a quill, splitting the quills lengthwise and removing the pith, then binding them into strips. Buggy whips with a featherbone center were produced a few years after the corset stays hit the market. Within a year the company's staff grew from nine to seventy-five. The Warren Featherbone Company is still in business today, but moved from Three Oaks in the 1950's. Portions of the original Featherbone factory still stand as a monument to that prosperous venture.

## Observations

The Village of Three Oaks is a rural community surrounded by farms with dedicated community-minded natives, and a number of new arrivals experiencing old-fashioned warm hospitality. There is also a growing art community within the Village. The Village has the largest Flag Day Parade in the country (June), which includes a fun-filled weekend that hosts the Apple Cider Century, a nationally recognized weekend bicycle ride attracting over 7,000 bikers.

Three Oaks is still a picturesque little village with quaint old fashioned stores, including a meat market with sawdust on the floor and renovated bank and depot buildings that are the envy of history buffs throughout the state. The old Featherbone factory now houses a theater and is the home of several artists.

Three Oaks natives, known as "Oakers", have been very active in improving the looks and facilities of their Village. The community enjoys a low crime rate, beautiful parks, and an excellent school system, which make it very attractive for families with young children.

## Community Vision

- Improve the sidewalks in the Village.
- Construct a Community Band Shell in Dewey Cannon Park to be used for special occasions and weekly concerts by local bands and choirs.
- Complete Watkin's Park (Basketball, pavilion, playground and restrooms).



All Demographic Information is based upon the 2009 Census Estimate

## Population

1980 Census	1,774	
1990 Census	1,786	0.68 % increase
2000 Census	1,829	0.90 % increase
2009 Census Estimate	1,703	6.89 % decrease

## Personal Income

Median Family	\$53,889.00
Average per Capita	\$20,560.00
Median Household	\$44,449.00

## Labor Force

Total Work Force	1081
Unemployment Rate	8.1 %

## Housing

Number of Dwellings	845
Owner Occupied	591
Renter Occupied	178
Median Rent	\$781
Median Home Value	\$124,600

## Building Permits – 2010

	Number Issued	Dollar Amount
Commercial	24	\$440,370.00
Other	35	\$180,519.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>\$620,889.00</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

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



# Government

## Municipal Hall

Village of Three Oaks  
14 Maple Street  
Three Oaks, MI 49128

Phone: (269) 756-9221  
Fax: (269) 756-3031  
www.threeoaks.org

## Council Meetings

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

## County Commissioner

Andrew Vavra  
(District 10)  
7120 W. Elm Valley Road  
Three Oaks MI 49128  
Phone: (269) 756-7162  
vavrafamily@qtm.net

## 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, 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

The Village of Three Oaks is served by the following school district:

River Valley School District  
15480 Three Oaks Road  
Three Oaks MI 49128  
Phone: (269) 756-9541  
Enrollment: 721

# 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
Village	9.2450
Special Voted	3.6978
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>20.4005</b>

## School Taxes (Berrien RESA)

State Education Tax	6.0000
Non-Homestead (Business)	18.0000
Extra Voted Building & Site	0.0000
Debt Retirement	0.0000
Berrien RESA	0.1745
Special Education	2.1954
<b>Subtotals</b>	

## Homestead

**8.3699**

## Non-Homestead (Business)

**26.3699**



# Public Services

## Police

Chief of Police: Frank Nekvasil  
Phone: (269) 759-9585  
Sworn Officers (Full and Part Time): 9  
Reserve Officers: 10  
Civilian Employees: 0  
Number of Cars: 2

## Fire

Fire Chief: Dave Flick  
Phone: (269) 756-7233  
Number of Stations: 1  
Professional Firemen: 0  
Part-Time Paid: 21  
Volunteers: 22  
Insurance Rate Class: 7

## Ambulance Service

Director: Dana Lee  
Phone: (269) 756-9818  
Volunteers: 15  
Number of Ambulances: 2  
Paramedics: 2  
EMT's: 12  
MFR's: 1

## Trash Collection

Village contract – residential only  
Phone: (269) 756-9221  
Type: Reliable Disposal Services  
Pick Up Day: Tuesday

## Recycling

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

## Water

Village of Three Oaks Water Works  
Phone: (269) 756-9221  
Capacity: 360,000 GPD  
Source: Municipal Wells

## Sewer

Village of Three Oaks  
Phone: (269) 756-9221  
System Type: Lagoon System  
Capacity: 330,000 GPD

## Telephone

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

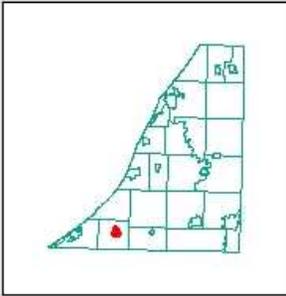
## Gas

Semco Energy Company  
Phone: (800) 624-2019

## Electric

American Electric Power Company  
(800) 311-6424

# Village of Three Oaks



County of Berrien  
All Rights Reserved - 1997

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.