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Inside

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Symphony

Animal Haven
Turns 70

2026 - Second Quarter



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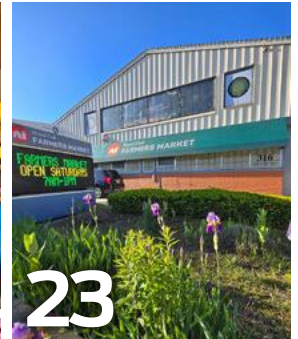
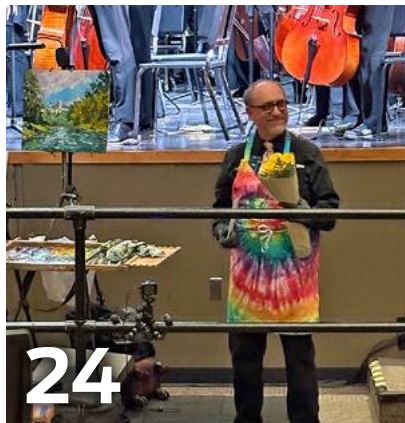
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From the MAYOR

Let's Keep Investing in our Community

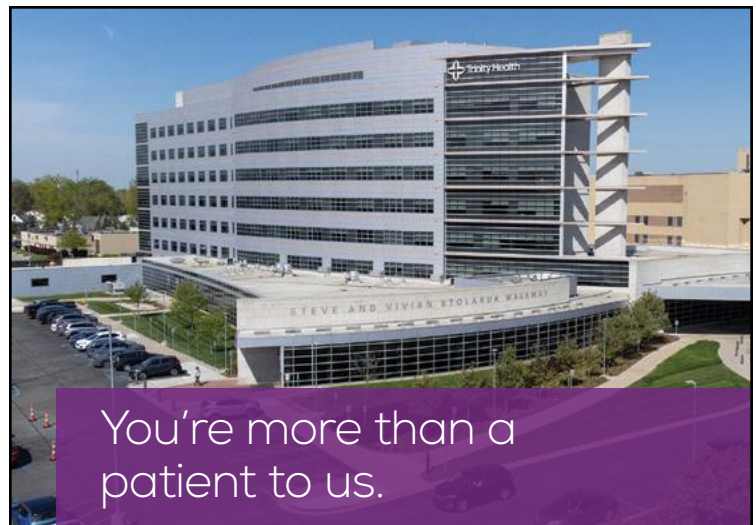
WE know that Royal Oak is one of the best places to call home. We regularly receive accolades confirming what we already know. It's not just our thriving neighborhoods, tree lined streets, 50-plus parks or world-class public safety that make our city desirable – it's also our vibrant and welcoming downtown.

In a world of big box takeovers and internet shopping, Royal Oak has managed to keep and attract some of the region's best small retailers and restaurants. Our downtown is a destination for so many people! In fact, of the Main Street Programs in the U.S., we rank #1 in Michigan and #9 in the country. Last year we welcomed over 2.7 million visitors!

We're grateful to live in a safe, vibrant and desirable place. We must continue to invest in the things that will keep our high quality of life.

The biggest factor of our success is public safety. We made an intentional effort to reform and invest in public safety years ago and we continue to enjoy the results today. The demands on police, fire and EMS are greater than ever before. We must continue to support the public safety milage in order to keep our standard of life moving in the right direction.

Mike Fournier
Mayor



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring / Summer 2026

ALL AGES & FAMILIES

- Pokémon Club..... Sat., May 9: 10:00 - 11:00 am
- Summer Reading Program Kickoff Party!.....Fri., Jun. 12: 3:30 - 5:30 pm
- Dino-Mite Cookie Decorating Workshop.....Mon., Jun. 15: 4:00 - 5:30 pm
- KPop Demon Hunters Party.....Wed., Jun. 24: 6:00 - 7:00 pm
- Red, White, and Read Community Picnic!.....Fri., Jun. 26: 3:30 - 5:30 pm

TEENS

- Dino Egg Bath Bombs.....Tue., Jun. 16: 6:00 - 7:00 pm
- Writing Workshop.....Thu., Jun. 18: 6:30 - 7:30 pm
- Video Game Lounge.....Sat., Jun. 27: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Register on our event calendar



or visit ropl.org

ADULTS

- Yemeni Coffee Tasting with Rehla Coffee.....Wed., May 6: 6:00 - 7:00 pm
- Intro to Rain Gardens.....Thu., May 7: 6:00 - 7:00 pm
- Local History Open House.....Mon., May 11: 5:30 - 7:00 pm
- Writers & Publishers Panel.....Tue., May 12: 6:00 - 7:30 pm
- Michigan Notable Book Author Visit.....Sat., Jun. 6: 2:00 - 3:00 pm
- USA Trivia Night!.....Tue., Jun. 16: 6:00 - 7:45 pm
- The Revolution: 250 Years of American Freedom.....Tue., Jun. 30: 6:00 - 7:00 pm

SUMMER READING PROGRAM: JUNE 9 - AUGUST 10

PRIZES AND ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS, TEENS, & ADULTS!

UNEARTH A STORY

FREE SUMMER KICKOFF PARTY!

Date: Friday, June 12

Time: 3:30 - 5:30 PM

Place: Library Terrace
& Centennial Commons

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- Face Painting
- Jumbo Yard Games
- Inflatable slide
- Popcorn
- Ray's Ice Cream
- Cornhole
- Skee Ball

Kickoff party
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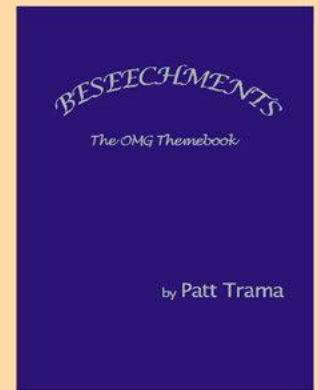
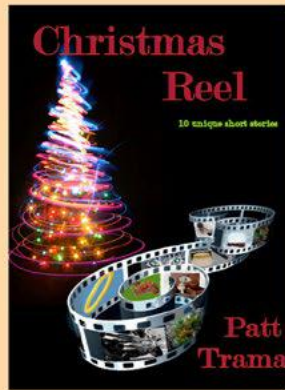
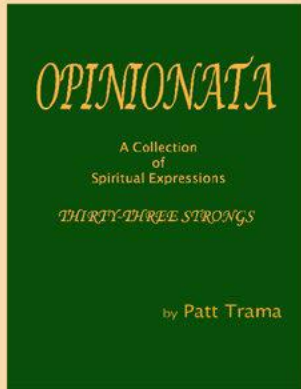


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Someday Starts Today For Joel Lewis II

OCC is the smart first step in becoming a teacher

IT'S almost as if Joel Lewis II was destined to end up at OCC, and not just because he hails from the southwest Detroit area. Joel's greatest fan, and mentor — his mom — set the example by earning her associate degree at OCC, as did his sister.

Joel took his family's guidance to heart, but his career choice was still in question. A small part of him still wanted to turn his love of English and writing into a career as an advertising copywriter.

That is, until he had a life-altering conversation with an academic advisor at Wayne State University.

"She sized me up pretty quickly and recommended I check into OCC to begin my undergrad course work. She explained how OCC has a very straight-forward and student-friendly approach to financial aid, scholarships and transfers to other institutions. The Michigan Transfer Agreement facilitates the transfer of credits from OCC to schools like MSU, Oakland University, University of Michigan, or

in my case Wayne State."

Joel took the sage advice from mom and enrolled at OCC. It wasn't long before he settled into student life.

"Having the flexibility to take online and in-person classes really fits my situation. I'm able to balance substitute teaching, coaching Special Olympics basketball and taking classes at OCC without the specter of life crushing student loan debt hanging over my head."

Another aspect of the OCC experience Joel really appreciates is the deeper connection he enjoys with his instructors, and with the course material.

"The smaller, more intimate class sizes at OCC allows instructors to make the class material relevant to each student's individual journey.

And no one personified this approach more than my Fundamentals of Speech instructor,



Learn why OCC is a great place to start your someday. Join a campus tour or virtual admission event. Visit oaklandcc.edu/getstarted

Dempsey Harrison III, who really takes the time to make the course material personally relevant to each student and their respective situation."

Joel is well on his way to achieving his ultimate goal of becoming a middle school English teacher, a role he believes will give him the opportunity to help shape young minds and serve as a role model for children, particularly those of color.

"Seeing an educated black man at the head of the classroom at such a young and impressionable age can have a profound impact on how kids see themselves and the opportunities available to

them. It wasn't long into my OCC experience that I felt I was locked into exactly what I'm supposed to be doing...which is to help these impressionable, young kids try to reach a level they don't even know is possible yet."

Joel Lewis II is on schedule to complete his course work and transfer by the fall of '24, and thanks to OCC and all of his hard work and dedication, his "Someday" is fast approaching.

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Blue Goat:

Making Exceptional Dining the Main Thing

DDA support is crucial as new Main Street restaurant Blue Goat thrives

By Angela Calabrese

GERGE Teftsis grew up in a culture that holds food and entertaining in high regard. His family owns the storied Astoria bakeries in Greektown and Royal Oak – so it really isn’t a surprise to see how he ended up as owner/operator on the Blue Goat restaurant in downtown Royal Oak (321 S. Main Street).

It’s how he got there that’s the interesting part.

He went to college at the University of Colorado-Boulder, where he earned a classics degree. For those not familiar, it’s the study of ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, focusing on their languages (Latin and Ancient Greek), literature, history, art, archaeology and philosophy.

But what he learned at college pales in comparison to what he gained while there, which is a best friend, roommate and now-business partner – chef Anderson Hardy. The two met at Frasca Food and Wine, a Michelin-starred, James Beard award-winning restaurant.

“He was a server there,” Teftsis said. “He was standing outside the restaurant and I had never met him before and he said, ‘Are you looking for a roommate?’ And I was.”

Iowa native Hardy has been around the country, including the San Francisco Bay Area, Hawaii, and Chicago. He’s a graduate of the California Culinary

Academy, and has served as an adjunct professor in culinary arts in Des Moines.

But when Teftsis first asked Hardy to become his partner in Blue Goat, the answer was a resounding and firm no – until Teftsis eventually talked him into it.

They are now roommates once again, and running Blue Goat together.

The eatery, which opened in July 2025, was a hit out of the gate, and sits in the spot that

was formerly City Ramen. To create the Modern Greek cozy décor, Teftsis and his team reimagined the space.



George Teftsis (left) and Chef Anderson Hardy.



"We were inspired by traditional Greek stucco and walnut tones for the interior," he said.

Chef Hardy's recipes have already earned raves in the area, as Blue Goat was listed #4 in the Free Press's Top Ten New Restaurants in Metro Detroit.

"To receive something of that accolade is . . . we're just very grateful," Teftsis said.

Chef Hardy cooks from scratch, using trusted vendors such as Motor City Seafood, Detroit Wholesale Produce, Northern Haserot, Atlas Wholesale Foods and more.

Teftsis also appreciates all the support they've received from the city and the DDA.

"They're great to work with," he said. "Just about every member of the city commission has been in to support us."

Teftsis said he's looking forward to being in the community for a long time.

"We want to be part of the community, and we want the community to be part of us," he said.

For more information, hours and menu, visit <https://www.bluegoatroyaloak.com/>. Teftsis recommends making reservations on the weekends.



Blue Goat's shiny new façade was in part funded by the Royal Oak DDA's Façade Grant program, which reimburses applicants for approved façade (including windows and signage) work on downtown buildings. Approved applicants will be reimbursed 50 percent of the eligible costs of façade work up to \$10,000 upon completion of the project.

"These investments represent a lot more than a new sign, fresh coat of paint or refreshed storefront," said DDA Director Isaac Kremer. "What they represent is the DDA helping to stretch scarce dollars a business has even further. With profit margins increasingly slim, every one dollar of support the DDA provides is equal to \$30 or more of sales a business must generate to get the same one dollar. As such a \$10,000 DDA investment can replace \$300,000 or more of sales a business generates to make the same investment on their own."



Main Street Minute

Exciting things are happening in downtown Royal Oak

REMOVALS are underway and underground work is happening on Fifth Street.



This is the start of a project that will develop a world-class public space that will be complete by August.

Melt N Dip recently opened a new location at 505 S. Main Street, and Tricho moved down the street to a new location at 501 S. Washington Avenue. New boutique Badd Kitty is bringing its elevated retail concept to Royal Oak, in the space formerly occupied by Noir Leather (124 W. Fourth Street), which is moving to another location outside of downtown. We have many more business openings to announce shortly.

Other businesses are renovating or expanding, including Creative Art Studio and Icon Pix Studios Karaoke – both on Fourth Street.

What can you expect from the Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority in the coming months? A \$100,000 business recruitment and retention fund from the DDA will soon launch and accept applications from existing and new downtown businesses. In April, a special invitation-only event at Bamboo with the Small Business Administration will help to connect businesses with funders.

We are hard at work to make Royal Oak the best place to open and operate a business in southeast Michigan. And soon enough, live music will return to Centennial Commons and the Farmers Market through programs that the DDA helps to fund.

A team from Royal Oak will attend the Main Street Now conference in Tulsa from April 12-16. This is the largest gathering of downtown professionals nationally each year. The host organization, Main Street America, recently announced Royal Oak is the ninth most visited Main Street program in the country and the top visited in Michigan, with 2.73 million visitors in 2025.

See You Downtown!

Isaac Kremer, Executive Director, RO DDA
isaack@romi.gov



Le Crepe: Turn Moments Into Memories

Offering fresh sweet and savory options in a Parisian setting

By Angela Calabrese

A love of good food and excellent service are what inspired Dennis Williams to open Le Crepe, 317 Washington, in downtown Royal Oak. Ten years later, he's still spreading the love, via his catering, crepe classes and events.

It's definitely been a labor of love over the last decade. Like most every other business owner, Williams was hit hard by COVID. In fact, he lost both his dishwasher and one of his chefs to the scourge. Also during that time, his other chef was diagnosed with lupus.

Even after weathering those tragic losses, Williams continues on, creating and serving sweet and savory concoctions in an atmosphere that evokes feelings of being in Paris, without the hassle of air travel.

When asked if he has a "signature" dish, Williams points to "The Obvious", from the savory poultry part of the menu. It's made with pan-seared chicken, caramelized apples, spinach, feta, pecans and an apple balsamic glaze.

Le Crepe's offerings are all made fresh to order – you will not see a heat lamp or microwave on site!

There are 50-plus varieties of sweet and savory crepe options

to choose from. Pair it with a house baby green salad or soup du jour for the ultimate meal. Add The Kermito (a drink featuring pineapple juice, Sprite and cranberry juice) for a refreshing finish.

Le Crepe is also vegan and gluten-free friendly. It does not serve alcohol but Williams said you can bring your own wine or champagne for events – there is no cork charge.

To get the full Parisian experience – both in atmosphere and culinary offerings – you need to head to Le Crepe.

"It's the least expensive trip to Paris you'll ever take," Williams said. "Leave your bags and bring your appetite."

Visit <https://lecreperestaurant.com/> for more information on specials, events, reservations, parties and more.



Le Crepe

Hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

Crepe-Making Classes

For those looking to up their crepe game at home, or learn it for the first time, Williams offers crepe-making classes on the first Thursday of every month, with the next one being May 7 from 6-8 p.m. The cost is \$65/person, and includes all ingredients, aprons and tasting.

Rent Le Crepe

For those looking to elevate their next party, you can rent out Le Crepe. Whatever the occasion – book clubs, bands, Friday night music series, poetry jams, etc., the space is tailor-made for sophisticated entertaining.

Catering

Got a birthday party, rehearsal dinner, corporate or other event coming up? We're a great option for your gathering! Inquire today and let us know how we can make your special occasion perfect!

Upcoming Events

With Mother's and Father's Day coming up, treat your parents to a delicious meal and one-of-a-kind experience!

Come and Get It

Downtown Royal Oak offers prime business spaces ready for what's next

DOWNTOWN Royal Oak is home to more than nine million annual visitors and has been recognized as the #9 most visited Main Street program in the country by Main Street America, the top visited in the state of Michigan. Supported by a range of financial incentive programs through the DDA designed to assist new and expanding businesses, the district offers both strong market exposure and meaningful resources for growth.

The area sustains a high volume of daily business activity across a wide range of industries. Law firms, engineering companies, human resource providers, and real estate offices operate alongside a strong mix of restaurants, retailers and service-based businesses. Together, they create a dense and active commercial environment within a compact geographic area.

What may be less known is the amount of quality space still available for lease.

For businesses seeking office, commercial or retail space, downtown Royal Oak presents a range of opportunities. Available properties include newly constructed spaces, adaptive reuse buildings such as a converted school, and historic structures with strong architectural character and prime locations. These options provide flexibility for a variety of business types and sizes.

Royal Oak has long maintained a strong and active downtown, and it continues to evolve in ways that create new opportunities for businesses to establish and grow. Recent openings – including Rehla Coffee and Blue Goat – demonstrate continued confidence in the district and reinforce that downtown Royal Oak remains a viable and attractive place to launch and grow.

Several high-visibility retail and restaurant spaces are currently available along Main Street, including 313 S. Main Street, 107 S. Main Street, 219 S. Main Street, and a large turnkey restaurant space at 419 S. Main Street. These locations offer strong foot traffic and positioning within the core of downtown, making them well-suited for both new concepts and established operators looking to expand.

Office users will also find a variety of options throughout downtown, with notable availabilities at 219 S. Main Street, 306 S. Washington Avenue, and 333 W. 7th Street.

These spaces can accommodate teams of varying sizes and provide the opportunity to establish a presence in a well-connected business district.

In total, more than 50 spaces are currently available for lease across downtown Royal Oak.

The demand, infrastructure and business community are already in place. The opportunity now is to build on that foundation.

The Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority remains focused on supporting business attraction and retention efforts to ensure continued economic vitality. For more information on available properties, funding opportunities and business support programs, contact the DDA at dda@romi.gov. We can't wait to see which new business will arrive in Royal Oak next!



Available space includes (clockwise from top left) 313 S. Main Street, 107 S. Main Street, 219 S. Main Street, 333 W. 7th Street, 306 S. Washington Ave. and 419 S. Main Street.

A Long History of Serving

North Main Animal Hospital has been a staple in Royal Oak for 70 years By John Maurice

NORTH Main Animal Hospital has been a vital part of the community, serving Royal Oak for nearly 70 years. Located at 1611 North Main Street just south of 12 Mile, the practice was originally called Caswell Animal Hospital and Caswell Pet Clinic, run by Dr. Don Caswell starting in 1942.

The original building was constructed in 1929 and served as a waiting room for the Royal Oak streetcar line, which traveled up Main Street to 12 Mile Road. Later, it became Bush Manufacturing Co. during World War II, before Dr. Caswell purchased and converted it into an animal hospital.

In 1951, Dr. Don Francisco took over the practice and renamed it North Main Animal Hospital. A longtime neighbor was Shorty's Auto Parts, which was probably a familiar sight (or maybe an eyesore) to longtime Royal Oak residents.

Shorty's actually existed before the animal hospital. From the early days of the animal hospital, there was a small cottage on the property west of the main building that hospital personnel could use in a pinch. (See top photo). An addition to the animal hospital in 1994 necessitated the removal of the cottage.

North Main Animal Hospital has a long history of its doctors staying with the practice for many years. The founder, Dr. Francisco, served from 1951 until his retirement in the early 1980s. His original partner, Dr. Gerald Ricketts, was with the hospital from 1964 to 1987. Dr. Bruce Baker joined the hospital in 1973 and remained actively involved for an impressive 50 years, retiring in 2023. Dr. Jim Mast, who was a partner of Dr. Baker, initially worked at North Main while still in high school. After college, Dr. Mast joined the staff full-time in 1987 and retired in 2020.

The hospital currently employs four veterinarians: Dr. April Simms, Dr. Jessica Fattal-Stebbins, Dr. Priscilla Koehler, and Dr. Precious Bagdonas-Bailey, who recently joined the practice.

The top photo, taken in 1951, shows the hospital just before it became North Main. The sign for Shorty's Auto Parts is visible just past the white picket fence to the left of the hospital. The small cottage that remained until 1994 is located to the right.



In 1951, Dr. Don Francisco took over the practice (top) and renamed it North Main Animal Hospital. The North Main Animal Hospital (bottom) as it is seen today.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Bruce Baker (top) and by John Maurice (bottom)

NEW EXHIBIT OPENS

Cemeteries preserve a snapshot of history, and the Royal Oak Historical Museum has opened a new exhibit on the history of the city's three cemeteries, whose graves date back to 1826. The exhibit explores the meanings of the gravestone symbols, stories of some of the veterans buried there and the story of the Fraquelli family, Royal Oak's stone-carving brothers. Come see the exhibit and look back through the centuries. The exhibit is open through July 25.

LEARN MORE HISTORY

If you are interested in discovering more about Royal Oak's rich history:

- **JOIN** the Royal Oak Historical Society, and as a member, you will receive our quarterly newsletter by mail or email that includes feature articles on the people and events that helped shape and grow our city. Yearly memberships are discounted this year during our membership drive, starting at \$17.76 (normally \$30) for individuals and \$20.26 (normally \$50) for families.
- **ATTEND** the Royal Oak Historical Society's monthly speakers series on the second Friday of every month at the museum. Tickets are \$15 and are limited to 50 attendees.
- **VOLUNTEER** your time at the Royal Oak Historical Museum as a docent, researcher or helper.
- **VISIT AND ENJOY** the alternating exhibits at the Royal Oak Historical Museum, 1411 W. Webster Road. Hours are 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

For more information,
visit royaloakhistoricalsociety.com
or call (248) 439-1501.



Please visit and support the Royal Oak Historical Museum at 1411 W. Webster Road in Royal Oak. For more information visit royaloakhistoricalsociety.com or call (248) 439-1501. Hours are 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

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Two Important Millage Proposals on the August 4, 2026 Primary Election:

PUBLIC SAFETY & SANITATION



For residents of the City of Royal Oak, this summer's August 4, 2026 Primary Election ballot will include two Charter proposals: a public safety millage to support Police, Fire, and emergency medical services, and a renewal of the city's existing sanitation millage.

We encourage you to learn more about these important millage proposals and the departments and services they support.

Learn more about the proposals and find answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ) by visiting romi.gov/2026-Millage-Proposals.

Have additional questions? Email millage questions to ROMillages2026@romi.gov.

Learn more about the Royal Oak Police Department at romi.gov/Police.

Learn more about the Royal Oak Fire Department at romi.gov/228/Fire.

Learn about curbside garbage and recycling, yard waste pickup, sustainability efforts, and Oakland County's Materials Management waste-reduction plan—all of which are supported by the sanitation millage:

www.romi.gov/324/Recycling

romi.gov/346/Refuse

romi.gov/Sustainability

romi.gov/Yard-Waste

Oakland County Materials Management Plan:
bit.ly/4uxPuCM

Charter Proposal: Royal Oak Public Safety Millage

Supporting Police, Fire, and emergency medical services



The proposed Royal Oak public safety millage would authorize the City to levy up to 4.6 mills for a ten-year term. **This is a renewal of the 3.975 mills approved by voters in 2012, 2017, and 2021, plus a modest increase of 0.625 mills.**

The public safety millage will continue to support Royal Oak's essential Police, Fire, and emergency services. The Police and Fire Departments provide much more than basic services: they act as benchmarks for

excellence throughout the region, with some of the best coverage, fastest response times, and most skilled personnel. Millage funding allows the City to deliver these best-in-class services while also meeting the demands of rising costs in staffing, technology, healthcare, facilities, vehicles, and more.

The funding also helps our public safety teams offer unique, modern programming and community education, such as the Co-Responder mental health

response team; CPR and lifesaving techniques trainings; citizens and youth police academies; fire and crime investigations units; safety coverage for incredibly large-scale public events, including Arts Beats & Eats and the Woodward Dream Cruise; and more.

The longer millage term (ten years versus five) allows us to do longer-range forecasting, planning, and purchasing, ultimately saving money and leading to more strategic decision-making.

Charter Proposal: Royal Oak Sanitation Millage

Supporting essential solid waste and recycling services



The proposed sanitation millage is a renewal of the existing millage; if approved, it would authorize the City to levy up to 1.00 mills for a five-year term—the same rate and length of time as was previously approved. **This millage has been in place, approved by voters in five-year increments, since 1991.**

The sanitation millage will continue to provide a dedicated and reliable funding source for essential solid waste and recycling services.

Royal Oak residents enjoy a number of services that are subsidized by the sanitation millage, including garbage and recycling bins and curbside pickup, and seasonal yard waste and fall leaf pickup.

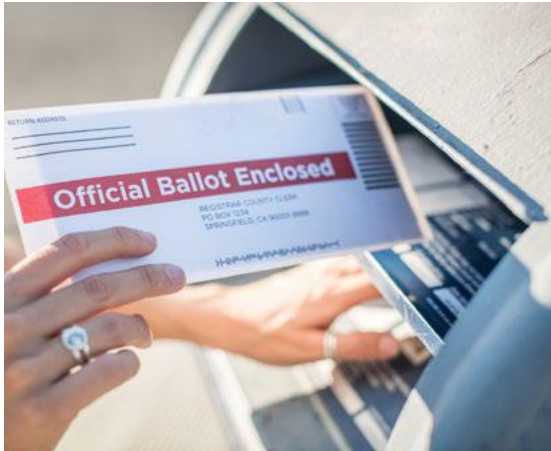
The millage also helps fund important sustainability initiatives, including composting programs, recycling education, and zero-waste efforts. These will be essential as the City works to implement Oakland County's Materials Management Plan (MMP)—a new set of

waste-reduction requirements by Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)—necessitating all Michigan counties to reduce the materials sent to landfills. The County has appointed experts and leaders to help our communities reach the State's goal of a 45% recycling rate by identifying alternative methods of repurposing materials, including repair, reuse, recycling, and composting.

8

★ ★ ★ Voting Matters! ★ ★ ★

Be “Election Ready” & Make Sure You Know How & Where to Vote



AV Ballots

Absentee ballots will be mailed to everyone on the permanent AV list during the last week of June. Want to request an absentee ballot? Visit mvic.sos.state.mi.us/AVApplication.

Your Voting Info

Voting in person and can't remember your polling location? Can't remember if you're even registered to vote? The Michigan Voter Info Center has you covered: mvic.sos.state.mi.us.



See the Ballot

Want to see a copy of what your ballot will look like before heading to the polls? Visit bit.ly/oakland-elections.

Voting Convenience

Did you know that the City offers early voting? And convenient drop-off boxes for returning your absentee ballots? Learn more at romi.gov/163/Elections-Voting.

See Over 1,500 5-Star Reviews on Google!

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Dr. Mary Jaddou
Orthodontist



ROYAL OAK SCHOOLS

A COMMUNITY OF EXCELLENCE

2026 Bond

Royal Oak Schools is preparing for the future with a no-tax-rate increase capital improvement bond proposal on the August 4, 2026 ballot. This is an investment designed to enhance student learning, modernize infrastructure, and strengthen safety across the district. Built on community input and long-term planning, the proposal aims to ensure that every student learns in environments that are safe, innovative, and built for tomorrow.

LEARN MORE

www.royaloakschools.org

2026 Bond

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS



Enhanced Student Environments



Modernized Infrastructure & Accessibility



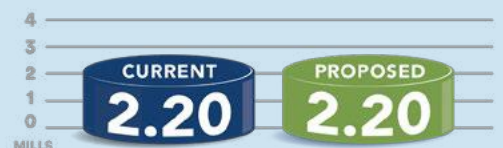
Improved Security & Visitor Experience



Revitalized Athletic & Performance Spaces

ZERO INCREASE

TO THE CURRENT MILLAGE RATE



Teachers of the Year

ROYAL OAK SCHOOLS is proud to announce the 2026 Teachers of the Year, recognizing educators who demonstrate exceptional dedication, creativity and impact on student learning and the school community. This year's teachers exemplify excellence in instruction, student engagement and professional leadership across a wide range of subjects and grade levels.

Mary Beth Nagy | Preschool

Mary Beth Nagy, an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teacher at the Royal Oak Early Education Center at Addams, creates a nurturing preschool classroom where students feel valued, build confidence, and make meaningful progress through developmentally appropriate, individualized support. With over 13 years in Royal Oak Schools and a career in education spanning back to 1990, she is known for fostering curiosity, joy in learning, and a strong foundation for young learners.



Miranda McArthur | Elementary Mathematics

Miranda McArthur, a fourth-grade teacher at Addams Elementary School, fosters an inclusive classroom where students build confidence, embrace challenges and develop a love of learning. Since joining Royal Oak Schools in 2020, she has strengthened inclusive practices, supported students with diverse needs, and served as a district math leader, mentoring colleagues and promoting excellence.



Shannon Bowman | Middle School Spanish / World Languages

Shannon Bowman, a Spanish teacher at Royal Oak Middle School, creates an engaging and supportive classroom where students enjoy learning through interactive, culturally rich experiences. With more than 24 years in Royal Oak Schools, she differentiates instruction, supports students academically and socially, and builds strong relationships that inspire deeper learning.



Alec Snyder | High School History / Extracurricular Leadership

Alec Snyder, a social studies teacher at Royal Oak High School, teaches students through inquiry-based learning, simulations, and discussions that build critical thinking and empower them as informed citizens. With more than 29 years in Royal Oak Schools, he extends his impact by leading Model UN, coaching JV football, and developing student leadership programs that shape generations of learners.



Angela Hall | Support Person of the Year

Angela Hall, secretary at Oakland Elementary, helps create a school environment where everyone feels supported, valued and set up for success. For over 14 years, her dedication, care, and unwavering support for students and staff have made a difference in countless ways each day.



RAVENS

Royal Oak Schools' New Special Education Center-Based Program

Royal Oak Schools is proud to



announce the launch of RAVENS (Restoring Academic Vigor by Engaging Neurodivergent Students), a new, specialized K-8 center-based program designed to provide individualized, proactive assistance for students who benefit from a structured and highly supportive learning environment. The program will begin next school year and will be the first of its kind in Oakland County.

RAVENS represents a significant investment in serving students within our own community whose needs are best met through a smaller, intentionally designed setting. By creating this in-district program, Royal Oak Schools is expanding its capacity to support diverse learners while keeping students connected to their home district and community.

The program will operate in a dedicated space (previously the Addams Early Childhood Center) separate from Addams Elementary, with its own secured entrance and clearly defined structure. Building improvements will be made over the summer and in time for its launch in fall 2026. The Special Education Department will also be located onsite, strengthening coordination and ensuring immediate access to support and resources.

Enrollment will remain intentionally small to ensure strong student-to-staff ratios, close supervision and meaningful relationships. Placement will occur through the IEP (Individualized Education Program) process and professional team review to ensure the program is the right fit for each student. As students progress, the program will incorporate community-based instruction to help prepare them for high school and beyond.

RAVENS will bring expanded specialized staffing and expertise to the district with new hires, including certified special education teachers, trained paraprofessionals, behavioral support through a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), and access to related service providers such as social work, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. These added professionals strengthen not only the program itself, but the district's overall ability to serve students with diverse needs.

"This program reflects our commitment to meeting students where they are and building innovative pathways that allow them to thrive," said Dr. Ericka Watson, director of special education. "RAVENS enhances our ability to provide individualized support while maintaining safe, structured, and positive learning environments for all students."

Schools continued on page 22



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Schools continued from page 21



SHAKING the TREE

A Royal Oak Schools Podcast

LISTEN in to Royal Oak Schools' official podcast, "Shaking the Tree," as Superintendent Dr. John Tafelski talks with students, teachers, administrators, and community members about some of the amazing things happening in all corners of the school district. Besides featuring voices from across the schools, the podcast gives behind-the-scenes insights into the programs, decisions, and plans happening in real time. Tune in to hear how staff prepare for new kindergarteners, Royal Oak High School athletes make future plans for after graduation, and even how the community participated in early discussions about the upcoming proposed bond.

Join us as we climb through the Royal Oak Schools community to provide insight into the decisions being made for our students and to shake up what you know about the district.

SHAKING THE TREE: A ROYAL OAK SCHOOLS PODCAST

Join Royal Oak Schools Superintendent Dr. John Tafelski as he connects with the school community, shares insights on key decisions for students, and challenges what you know about the district. Below is a list of our most recent episodes:



EPISODE 12: ROYAL OAK ATHLETICS SIGNING DAY
Javien Johnson & John Friedrich



EPISODE 13: JUSTICE 101 STUDENT PROGRAM
Hon. Derek Meinecke



EPISODE 14: TEEN COURT STUDENT PROGRAM
Hon. Andrew Kowalkowski & Genna Merrick



EPISODE 15 & 16: BOND PROPOSAL 2026
Jennifer Kowalkowski & Kerry Derminer

SCAN THE QR CODE TO LISTEN
TO SHAKING THE TREE:



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Here's What's Happening

AT YOUR FARMERS MARKET THIS SPRING AND SUMMER!

In May the Saturday Farmers Market is full of flats of flowers, hanging baskets and porch pots. They make a great gift for Mother's Day. Be sure to stop by!
7 a.m. – 1 p.m.

If you're into antiques and one-of-a-kind items, the Sunday Antique and Collectible Show is the place to be from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Also, check out the Sights & Sounds ad to the right, and mark your calendars for events happening throughout the summer.

We hope to see you there!



Wednesday, May 13, 4-9pm

5:30-6:30pm- Family Zumba W/ YMCA

5:30-6:30pm - Lily Alattar

7-9pm - The Detroit Retro Society

Wednesday, June 10, 4-9pm

FAMILY PRIDE

5pm & 6:30pm - Drag Queen Story Time

5:30-6:30pm - Prism Men's Choirs

7-9pm - One Up Duo

Wednesday, July 8, 4-9pm

5:30-6:30pm- TBA (Children's Performance)

5:30-6:30pm - Metro Soul Band

7-9pm - Motor City Josh Big Band

Wednesday, Aug 12, 4-9pm

5:30-6:30pm- TBA (Children's Performance)

5:30-6:30pm - Lilly McPhee

7-9pm - Devar & the Detroiters

Thank you to our sponsors



SOUTH OAKLAND ART ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH ROYAL OAK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

By Melissa Wilson

FOR more than six decades, the South Oakland Art Association (SOAA) has brought artists together to share ideas, develop their skills and contribute to the cultural life of the community. Founded in 1960, the nonprofit organization continues to connect artists and art lovers across south Oakland County and the greater Detroit area through programs, exhibitions and collaborative events.

SOAA is also a place where friendships and artistic connections grow. Members often meet outside of regular meetings to paint en plein air, travel together to explore and photograph Michigan's natural beauty or simply spend time creating alongside fellow artists. These shared experiences help foster a supportive creative community.

This spring, SOAA members contributed their talents to a meaningful community cause by painting dozens of handcrafted bowls for a local Empty Bowls fundraiser. The project combined creativity with compassion, helping raise awareness and support for efforts addressing food insecurity.

SOAA has also formed an exciting new partnership with the Royal Oak Symphony Orchestra, bringing visual art and music together in a unique way. During a recent concert, SOAA member John Nagridge created a painting in a live demonstration inspired by the orchestra's performance. The collaboration was well received by concertgoers, and the partnership will continue with SOAA artists painting during future performances. Several association members also displayed and sold artwork during the concert events, further connecting audiences with local artists.

Looking ahead to summer, SOAA will participate in the Royal Oak Outdoor Art Fair, held June 27–28, 2026, in Memorial Park in Royal Oak. The event is widely considered one of Michigan's most enjoyable art fairs, featuring a vibrant mix of fine art, live music and a welcoming park setting shaded by the many mature trees that make the park a favorite gathering place.

SOAA works closely with the Royal Oak Arts Council to help prepare for the fair by placing signage and assisting with event coordination. Visitors can also find SOAA artists exhibiting and selling their work throughout the weekend.

In the fall, the organization will present its annual members exhibition at the Royal Oak Historical Society Museum. The show will run from November 7 through November 21, 2026, with a public reception scheduled for November 8.

SOAA remains committed to keeping the arts accessible and welcoming to the community. Membership is open to anyone 18 or older and costs just \$30 per year. From September through June, the group meets monthly and invites guest speakers and artists to share demonstrations, techniques and creative insights.

The next meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, at the Mahany/Meininger Community Center, 3500 Marais Avenue in Royal Oak. Artist Cynthia Gould will present a program on acrylic painting techniques.

Artists and art enthusiasts interested in learning more are encouraged to attend a meeting or contact the organization at SOAA200@gmail.com.





THE DETROIT GROOVE KEEPER

Tino Gross has one of the area's most enduring blues careers

By Ryan M. Place

In basements, clubs, studios and record shops, Royal Oak's Tino Gross has spent more than half a century living inside Detroit music.

Gross has built a career as a drummer, songwriter, guitarist, producer, singer, radio host, label founder and keeper of the city's blues tradition. Gross has played with MC5's Wayne Kramer, shared a stage at the Fox with Bob Dylan, fronted the Howling Diablos, backed dozens of blues legends, and hosted *Tales From the D* on PBS. He didn't merely witness Detroit's musical history, he helped make it.

"I knew at 7 years old I was going to be a musician," Gross said. "Never thought of anything else."

Born in Detroit on January 2, 1953, Gross grew up on Oakfield Street in northwest Detroit in a house shaped by art and music.

"My mom was a



painter and there were lots of beatnik creative types at our house all the time," he said. "They started giving me jazz albums. Then one person brought a snare drum, another a cymbal, suddenly I had a drum kit."

He fell in love with drums early and listened to jazz and southern blues on the radio, then later the MC5.

"My brother, Neil Zussman, worked at Detroit's Grande Ballroom," he said. "In 1966-67, I was sneaking in underage to watch the MC5 live. When they were onstage, it felt like the whole place was in orbit. Nothing else like it."

In 1971, Tino studied jazz drumming for a summer at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

"Then my very first gig in 1972 in Ann Arbor was with The Brooklyn Blues Busters," he said. "We backed up Detroit blues legend, John Lee Hooker."

That led to lots of calls from the Detroit blues scene.

"Baby Boy Warren, Doctor Ross, Bobo Jenkins, Little Junior, etc.," he said. "Over the past 50 years, I've been fortunate to play thousands of live shows and be featured on over 200 albums."

From 1980-98, Tino was also a radio DJ.

"I hosted the Big City Blues Cruise program as Martino DeLorenzo," he said. "Every Sunday, I played obscure blues 45s on WEMU 89.1 FM."

Tino was also drummer for The Urbations.

"John Sinclair was our manager," he said. "We played road gigs everywhere, including CBGB's in New York."

In 1990, he co-founded the Howling Diablos with saxophonist Johnny Evans, initially for a Gary Grimshaw art show.

"The band was a blend of blues, funk, garage rock and Motor City attitude," he said. "High energy stuff."

Then in 1992, Tino was invited by Bob Dylan to join in onstage at the Fox Theatre.

"He gave me a red vintage Telecaster, and I played Elmore James' 'Dust My Broom' in the key of E," he said. "Unforgettable night."

Gross later launched Funky D Records with his wife, Lexy Gross (DJ Linda Lexy) and continues producing Detroit music.

Today, Gross still calls Royal Oak home, where he's lived since 1983.

"Great neighbors and we go for lots of walks around the neighborhoods and parks," he said. "And I love UHF Records. Music has never been about nostalgia alone for me. It is a living thing that is always morphing."

Tino Gross is a Detroit original who is still playing, still creating and still keeping the groove alive.



Did You Know?

Fire Department offers programs designed to protect seniors, vulnerable members of community

By Angela Calabrese

Serving Seniors

The City of Royal Oak has made no secret of the fact that it's working hard to create a community where its seniors can "age in place". This means many things, like upgrading infrastructure, improving emergency call response times and providing information and services that most benefit its oldest residents.

To that end, the department has brought back a program designed to help Royal Oak's seniors – both medically, and in other ways, too.

Once a month, Assistant Fire Chief Mike Gladieux stops by the Mahany Meininger Senior Center (3500 Marais Avenue), where he spends a few hours checking seniors' blood pressure, and answering any other questions they may have – if he can. (You probably want to save your tax and insurance questions for the qualified experts, Gladieux said). Residents can also stop by Station 1 (215 E. Sixth Street) for a blood pressure check as well.

Lockboxes

Along with health checks, firefighters also want to remind residents about its lockbox service. This program is geared toward seniors, those living alone or those with chronic health conditions. The department does not provide the lockboxes, but residents can pick them up at Frenz Hardware at (1010 North Main) for \$45-\$50.

It works like this: the box is locked with a special, secure key known only to the fire department. It's usually installed near the front door, so if there is an emergency, and first responders are called to the residence, they can easily access the lockbox and would be able to get into the front door without knocking it down. The purpose is to get to the resident as quickly as possible without causing a whole lot of damage in the process.

File of Life

Another process that the fire department is promoting is the use of what's called a "File of Life", which is exactly what it sounds like – a file of all important, pertinent



information that first responders would need to know upon arriving to help someone in need.

"It gives us information in case we come to your home and you can't tell us what your medicines or medical conditions are," Gladieux said.

The "file" is a magnetic pouch that holds a list of medical conditions, the medications taken to help those conditions and any other information that would be deemed relevant during emergency response and treatment.

The Royal Oak Fire Department encourages folks to stick the file of life on their refrigerators, so the first responders can find it easily when they arrive.

Gladieux said he's been handing out the files at the senior center during his monthly visits. Residents can also get them at Station 1.



Open-Door Events

In May, the department will be starting what it calls "open door" events, which will give the community a chance to stop by, see the trucks, talk to firefighters on duty, and also have the chance to be taught sidewalk CPR. Gladieux stressed that the training is not certified, but simply a lesson on what to do in case you come across someone having a cardiac event.

The open-door events will be happening at Station 1 on April 18 (which will have already happened by the time this publication hits homes), May 16 and June 20 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Whether the program continues after that depends on the community's participation, Gladieux said.

"If people are out and about, we'd love for them to stop by," he added.

For more information on the above programs, you can contact Asst. Fire Chief Mike Gladieux at (248) 246-3801.



TO YOUR HEALTH!

DECODING EGGS

What are you really getting?

By Lisa Howard

EGGs can seem mysterious. Fortunately, with a little know-how, it's (mostly) easy to figure out what kind of eggs would suit your needs.

Eggs are particularly lovely combined with spring ingredients like mushrooms, alliums and fresh herbs, and they can be prepared in a variety of ways: baked into quiches (or mini quiches), sautéed into frittatas, hard-boiled, poached, made into omelets or scrambled. (If necessary, a tattered omelet can easily become a tidy scramble.)

As a complete protein, eggs are ideal for light-but-hearty meals as well as non-starchy desserts like custards and mousses. You can even make your own top-notch mayo using hard-boiled yolks and extra-virgin olive oil!

Eggshell colors can be shades of white, brown and blue. Different breeds lay different-colored eggs, making this factor kind of like human hair colors. While you might prefer blue eggshells (or hair), the color doesn't impact the quality or flavor of the egg.

Egg size can matter when you're cooking from recipes since most recipes are based on large eggs. If you opt for jumbo or peewee or any size other than large, your results might not match what the recipe stipulates. But you might want to use nonlarge eggs for other uses, like adorably small, hard-boiled eggs. (Quail eggs are even smaller.)

Egg grades are AA, A and B. Grade A is what's mostly sold in stores. According to CertifiedHumane.org, AA eggs have "thick, firm whites and high, round yolks and strong shells," while Grade A eggs have "reasonably firm" whites. Grade B eggs have "thin whites and wider yolks" and their shells may be stained. (You won't see those in stores.)

The pack date is the day the eggs were washed, graded and placed in the carton. This date is expressed using the three-digit Julian calendar, where January 1st is 001 and December 31st is 365. (So February 1st is 032.)

Free-range eggs are from hens allowed access to the outside. Technically, this "access" can be a tiny window high up in the wall or a tiny hatch leading to a paved parking lot. It can also be full outdoor access, making this label not as useful as you might think.

Pasture-raised eggs come from hens that probably are truly outside, roaming and foraging. But because the USDA doesn't

have requirements for this label, shoppers need to look for an animal welfare certification such as Certified Humane Raised and Handled or Animal Welfare Approved.

Organic eggs come from hens that are, according to the USDA, "free to roam in their houses and have access to the outdoors. The hens are fed an organic diet of feed produced without conventional pesticides or fertilizers." Again, though, "free-range" is a rather imprecise term.

Cage-free eggs are from hens that aren't kept in individual tiny pens. However, this has nothing to do with outdoor access or how much space hens actually have.

Vegetarian-fed eggs are from hens who are only fed vegetarian fare. But! As the saying goes, "The early bird gets the worm." Chickens are omnivores, not herbivores. If a hen is allowed to go outside, she will not be a vegetarian.

Hormone-free is meaningless since U.S. federal law requires that hens be raised without supplemental hormones.

Natural, farm-fresh, and all-natural mean essentially nothing. Per the USDA, "All raw single-ingredient meat and poultry qualify as 'natural.'"

Lisa Howard is a writer, editor and health educator who loves to share her joy of cooking delicious and nutritious foods during her community talks and culinary classes. You can find out more about her classes and recipes at www.theculturedcook.com.





ROYAL OAK
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2026 COMMUNITY EVENTS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ROYAL OAK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SUNDAY
7AM-2PM

**MAY
10**

32ND ANNUAL ROYAL OAK IN BLOOM

JOIN US AT SIXTH AND MAIN ST. FOR OUR ANNUAL MOTHER'S DAY EVENT FEATURING PERENNIALS, ANNUALS, HERBS, VEGETABLE PLANTS, OUTDOOR FURNITURE, GARDEN ART, BIRD FEEDERS AND MORE!

THURSDAYS
5:30-9:30 PM

JUNE
25
JULY
9, 16, 23, 30
AUGUST
6, 13, 20

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

CENTENNIAL COMMONS WILL BE TRANSFORMED INTO THE GO-TO DESTINATION THIS SUMMER FOR EIGHT NIGHTS OF FREE CONCERTS, FEATURING A DIVERSE LINE-UP OF MUSICIANS EACH WEEK. FACE PAINTING, FREE ICE CREAM (12 AND UNDER), AND A CLIMBING TOWER.

SUNDAY
TIME TBD

**OCTOBER
18**

41ST ANNUAL SPOOKTACULAR

GET READY FOR ONE OF ROYAL OAK'S MOST BELOVED HALLOWEEN TRADITIONS, TAKING OVER DOWNTOWN AND CENTENNIAL COMMONS! FAMILIES ARE INVITED TO EXPERIENCE A SPOOKTACULAR DAY FILLED WITH FESTIVE FUN, LIVELY ENTERTAINMENT, A DJ SPINNING SEASONAL FAVORITES, COSTUME CONTESTS, AND TRICK-OR-TREATING FOR ALL THE LITTLE GOBLINS. THIS YEAR BRINGS EVEN MORE EXCITEMENT WITH ROAMING CHARACTERS FOR PHOTO OPS, EXPANDED FACE PAINTING STATIONS, AND A FEW SURPRISES STILL UNDER WRAPS.

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Our TODAY Magazines are an incredible platform that allows the entire community to coalesce, interact and tout successes, initiatives, events and achievements on a yearly basis.

Our quarterly publications allow cities/townships, chambers, DDAs, schools, businesses, residents, etc. to connect and be proud of where they work, play and live.

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AROUND Royal Oak

April – July



- Wednesday night Sights & Sounds returns to the Farmers Market, 316 E. 11 Mile Road, on May 13 and will run once a month – June 10 (Family Pride), July 8 and August 12 from 4-9 p.m. Come out and enjoy good food, good music and entertainment for the whole family!

ONGOING

- The Royal Oak Farmers Market at 316 E. 11 Mile Road is open on Saturdays from 7 a.m.-1 p.m., with a full farm market selection, and Sundays from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., with antiques and collectibles for sale. For more information, visit www.romi.gov.
- The Food Truck Rally will be held the second Wednesday of each month beginning in April at the Royal Oak Farmers Market, 316 E. 11 Mile Road from 5-9 p.m. Visit www.romi.gov for more information.
- Every Thursday from June 25-August 20, the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce will host the Summer Concert Series in Centennial Commons Park, 221 E. Third Street, from 5:30-9:30 p.m. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and grab food and drinks from local restaurants and enjoy the music. Visit www.royaloakchamber.com for more information.



MAY

May 10

Royal Oak in Bloom

7 a.m.-2 p.m.
Sixth and Main streets
For 32 years, the annual flower and garden sale has been held in downtown Royal Oak on Mother's Day with flowers, plants, landscaping items and decorative lawn items for sale. Shop and enjoy treats and drinks from local food trucks. For more information, visit www.romi.gov.

May 16

Perennial Plant Swap

9-11 a.m.
Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior Community Center
3500 Marais Avenue
All are welcome to bring labeled perennial plants to the annual plant swap sponsored by the Royal Oak Garden Club and the Royal Oak Public Library. The free event is first come first served, and each participant will be allowed to take one plant for each plant they bring. For more information, visit www.ropi.org.

May 16

Wine Stroll

12-4 p.m.
Downtown Royal Oak
Celebrate two decades of sipping and savoring as you wander through the heart of downtown Royal Oak, sampling featured wines and signature hors d'oeuvres from over 20 downtown restaurants. Tickets available at DineRoyalOak.org.

May 25

Memorial Day Parade

9 a.m.
Downtown Royal Oak
Fourth and Main streets
Honor those who served in the annual Memorial Day parade followed by a ceremony at Centennial Commons. Visit www.romi.gov for more information.

JUNE

June 10

Family Pride

4-9 p.m.
Farmers Market
316 E. 11 Mile Road
This family-friendly gathering offers something for everyone, with exciting activities and entertainment for all ages. Enjoy live performances and indulge in a variety of delicious foods from local food trucks. Kids will enjoy free face painting, balloon art, inflatable bounce house, and craft table.



June 27-28

2026 Outdoor Art Fair

Saturday: 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sunday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Royal Oak Memorial Park
31050 Woodward Avenue
Experience a variety of fine arts and crafts as well food concessions in the park. For more information, visit www.romi.gov.

JULY

All of July

Sips of the Summer

Downtown Royal Oak
Beat the summer heat by embarking on our cocktail crawl throughout the month of July, where restaurants are shaking up their most refreshing and creative summer sips – just for you. Grab a Sips of the Summer passport at participating restaurants – the more you explore, the more chances you have to win fabulous prizes! Details at DineRoyalOak.org.

July 2-5

Royal Oak Taco Fest

Thursday: 4-11 p.m., Friday-Saturday: 11 a.m.-11 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Downtown Royal Oak
Enjoy a summer street festival with food from over 50 taquerias and eateries, ice-cold margaritas, live entertainment and fun for all ages. Tickets are \$12/person. Children 3 and under are free. For more information, visit www.royaloaktacofest.com.

PLEASE NOTE: Event details may have changed. Please check event website or social pages for the most up-to-date information.

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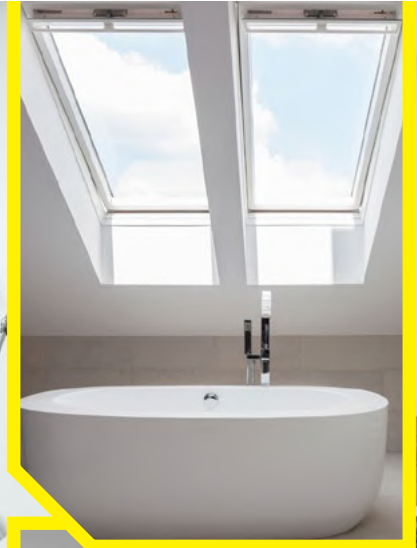
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