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Meet Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo is a community that effortlessly combines energy and innovation with friendliness and an easy-going attitude. Located in southwest Michigan, about two hours from Chicago, Kalamazoo is home to the nationally-recognized Western Michigan University, several colleges and a variety of cultural institutions. A vibrant Art Deco downtown sets the stage for quality dining, unique shops and galleries and live entertainment. Kalamazoo is conveniently located near lakes and offers lots of outdoor recreation, festivals and world-class attractions. Kalamazoo offers the big city benefits with a small-town feel, which makes Kalamazoo so appealing to its guests.

Fun Fact: In 2005, Kalamazoo received a $100,000 grant from Governor Jennifer Granholm for being one of the “Coolest Cities” in Michigan.

Kalama...Who?

Kalamazoo’s rich history can take the credit for the creation of such a unique name. The name “Kalamazoo” originally derived from the Indian tribes who were the first inhabitants of the region. The name is speculated to mean “mirage of reflecting river” or “bubbling boiling water.” Because of its unique name, many famous poets, songwriters and novelists have used the name in a variety of their works. Released in the 1940s, Glen Miller’s “I’ve Got a Gal in Kalamazoo” is one of the most memorable songs featuring the catchy name. Kalamazoo has received many titles throughout its history including “celery city,” “paper city” and “mall city.” The county was once known as the celery capital of the world in the early decades of the 20th century. Celery touted “Fresh as Dew from Kalamazoo” was shipped throughout the United States. In recent history, Kalamazoo County was known as the bedding plant capital of the nation and is now known as home to the largest growers co-op in the nation. The Kalamazoo Mall, built in 1959 and located in downtown Kalamazoo, was the first outdoor pedestrian shopping mall in the United States. Kalamazoo was once thriving with paper mills throughout the city. The paper mills employed nearly half the workforce in the area. By World War I, Kalamazoo was the largest paper producing area in the United States.
Kalamazoo at a Glance

Kalamazoo County:
The county includes following towns and villages:
Alamo  Galesburg  Portage
Augusta  Hickory Corners  Richland
Climax  Kalamazoo  Schoolcraft
Comstock  Oshtemo  Scotts
Cooper  Parchment  Vicksburg

Population:
Kalamazoo County Population: 258,818  (2014 U.S. Census Bureau estimate)
City of Kalamazoo Population: 75,922  (2014 U.S. Census Bureau estimate)

Geography:
Latitude: 42° 17’ 30” N
Longitude: 85° 35’ 14” W
Area: 580.18 sq. miles
Lakes: 101, 83 with public access
Elevation: 780 feet above sea level

Colleges and Universities:
Western Michigan University (public)
Kalamazoo College (private)
Davenport University (private)
Cornerstone University (private)
Kalamazoo Valley Community College (public)

Tallest Building:
Sky Rise Luxury Apartments (Downtown Kalamazoo)

Weather:
Average High/Low Jan: 33/18
Average High Low July: 86/61
Annual Snowfall: 78.6"
Annual Precip: 35.8"
Four Seasons of Activities

Spring
Blooming flowers, returning birds and budding trees are all signs that the excitement and colors of spring are back in southwest Michigan and Kalamazoo County. There is something for everyone to explore here.

• Maple Sugar Festival: As the weather begins to warm, Kalamazoo entices the appetite at the Maple Sugar Festival for the all-you-can eat pancake breakfast. The festival also offers maple sugar tours, pioneer sugar demonstrations, and the opportunity to try ice cream topped with maple syrup!

• St. Patrick’s Day Parade: Enjoy an afternoon downtown while listening to the sound of bagpipes and other traditional Irish music at the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.

• Bach Festival: Visitors can revisit the past at the Bach festival and discover the beautiful sounds of the music of J.S. Bach for an entire week.

Summer
Kalamazoo bursts with fun during the summer!

• Water activities: In this water wonderland, fish, swim, water-ski, sail or boat in dozens of lakes with public access throughout Kalamazoo County or visit the sandy shores of nearby Lake Michigan.

• Farmers Markets: Visitors may explore our many farmers’ markets to sample what is in season.

• Entertainment & Festivals: About a dozen festivals and fairs happen throughout the summer in Kalamazoo! Summer nights offer a variety of entertainment with Art Hops and the weekly Mixer on the Mall. Kalamazoo offers a plethora of festivals such as the Island Festival, which fills the streets with live reggae music and the sweet smell of Jamaican and Caribbean cuisine. Guests can get a true taste for our region at the Taste of Kalamazoo. The festival features more than 30 local restaurants and chefs offering mouth-watering combinations of ethnic cuisine, family favorites, exotic dishes and local specialties.

• June Jubilee: Kick-off downtown Kalamazoo’s summer events season! Art Hop & More, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts Fair, Greek Fest and the Do-Dah Parade keep Kalamazoo buzzing! For those who enjoy a good laugh the Do-Dah Parade is all about being silly, fun and embracing satire.
Fall
Fall is when southwest Michigan shows its true colors.
- **Color trails:** As temperatures begin to cool, the leaves of many trees begin to change, exhibiting an incredible palette of warm oranges, fiery reds, and striking golds. The Kalamazoo Nature Center’s scenic nature trails offer a place to view the changing colors while walking along the serene Kalamazoo River.
- **Agriculture:** The orchards, farmers’ markets, and farm stands are ripe with fresh fruits and vegetables in season, while the wineries are harvesting and producing award-winning wines and juices.
- **Olde Tyme Harvest Festival:** The Olde Tyme Harvest Festival is a great way to enjoy the fall season featuring hayrides, a pumpkin patch, flourmill demonstrations, blacksmithing and antique tractors.
- **Street Rod Nationals North:** Check out an array of more than 3,000 classic cars from yesteryear, live entertainment, arts and craft show, exhibitions, swap meets, games and the wrap-up award ceremony.
- **Halloween fun:** As Halloween approaches, take a guided “Ghosts of Kalamazoo Historical Tour,” stroll through spooky haunted forests or an abandoned dormitory. Psycho Ward & Nightmares was named a Michigan Top 10 Best Haunted Houses, according to MLive.com.

Winter
When snow begins to fall, Kalamazoo becomes a winter wonderland.
- **Holly Jolly Trolley:** The best way to experience the city is a ride on the FREE Holly Jolly Trolley to enjoy the breath-taking beauty of the holiday season in Kalamazoo. The Trolley passes by the glistening Bronson Park, decorated with a life-size nativity scene, snowmen and trails lined with life-size candy canes.
- **New Year’s Festival:** Ring in the New Year with the sound of the tuba at Kalamazoo’s annual New Year’s Festival. This celebration even features a 30-member tuba band! Then work up an appetite for the Bimbo’s Pizza eating contest followed by the crystal ball drop on the steps of city hall.
- **Kalamazoo Beer Week:** Enjoy a weeklong series of events that support the craft beer experience through special tastings, dinners and interactive events.
- **Chili Cook Off:** Warm up with sampling more than 40 chillies and voting for your favorite at the annual chili cook off.
- **Winter Sports:** People flock to the local ski resorts and toboggan runs or head to the Kal-Haven trail for snowmobiling and cross-country skiing and the lakes for ice fishing. There are six sheets of ice in Kalamazoo along with several skating ponds.
Hot Spots in Downtown Kalamazoo

On a visit to downtown Kalamazoo, stroll through six of the city’s many historical districts:

- **East End**: This district features the creative renovation of old railroad buildings into nightclubs, antique stores, coffee shops and microbreweries.

- **Arcadia**: A district that brings art, festivals, music, history, and education together.

- **South Town**: This area offers an eclectic mix of downtown neighborhoods, retail businesses and the elegant campus of Bronson Hospital.

- **Bronson Park**: Surrounded by stately churches, this park features celebrations, art shows, summer concerts and holiday displays.

- **Haymarket**: This district offers the latest in food and entertainment, surrounded by the classic architecture of the past.

- **Kalamazoo Mall**: The Kalamazoo Mall — anchored by the AAA 4-diamond Radisson Plaza Hotel and Suites on the north end and the Epic Center on the south end — is the first outdoor pedestrian mall in the United States. Offering a wide variety of shopping and dining choices, it is also the site for special events and activities.

Fun Fact: Bronson Park was the site of Abraham Lincoln’s only public speech in Michigan!
Kalamazoo History Timeline

- Pre-1800s-Kalamazoo’s first residents arrive! The Native American tribes known as the Moundbuilders were the first inhabitants of the region. The tribe subsisted on farming and built various mound-like structures throughout the region. One of the mounds is still around today, located in Bronson Park.
- 1828-Bazel Harrison (cousin of President William Henry Harrison) leads a group of men, women and children to the 14,000-acre Michigan grassland, which is now Kalamazoo.
- 1830-The county is approved on July 3 by Gov. Lewis Cass. The town is named “Bronson” after Titus Bronson who built the first cabin within the modern city limits of Kalamazoo.
- 1833-The Michigan and Huron institute is established and later named Kalamazoo College.
- 1836-A group of influential men who were not very fond of Titus Bronson petition to have the city name changed to Kalamazoo.
- 1846-The railroad arrived in Kalamazoo, giving the area greater agricultural potential.
- 1856-George Taylor grows the first celery stalks in Kalamazoo.
- 1859-Kalamazoo’s first public high school is built.
- 1867-The Kalamazoo Paper Company opens its first mill. After World War I the industry employed nearly one-half of the local labor force and was the largest paper producing city in the United States.
- 1884-Kalamazoo becomes a city.
- 1885-Upjohn Pill and Granule Company is created.
- 1902-Gibson Guitar is founded in Kalamazoo.
- 1903-Western Michigan University is founded (it was originally named Western Normal School).
- 1922-Kalamazoo becomes home to the Checker Cab Manufacturing Corporation and is the nation’s leading cab producer of the 1920s. The cabs are sent to major cities, such as New York and Chicago.
- 1931-Kalamazoo’s first radio station WKZO makes its first radio broadcast in the county.
- 1940’s-Architect Frank Lloyd Wright builds Usonian-style homes at Taliesin and Parkwyn Drive in Kalamazoo and in the City of Galesburg.
- 1946-Dr. Homer Stryker opens Stryker Instruments.
- 1959-The nation’s first outdoor walking mall opens in downtown Kalamazoo.
- 1963-Dr. Martin Luther King gives a speech at Western Michigan University’s Read Field House.
• 1973-Kalamazoo Wings professional hockey team plays its first game at Wings Stadium.
• 1980-Kalamazoo’s famous killer F3 tornado damages the city.
• 1985-Bell’s Brewery Inc. opens.
• 2005-Kalamazoo Public Schools receive national attention after announcing the Kalamazoo Promise.
• 2010-President Obama makes his first high school commencement speech as President at Kalamazoo Central High School’s Class of 2010 Graduation Ceremony

Historical Icons

Kalamazoo Mall
The Kalamazoo Mall was the first outdoor pedestrian mall in the United States. The shopping area, built in 1959, was four-blocks long, stretching from Lovell Street to the Arcadia Commons development. In 1999, two town blocks of the mall changed to accommodate auto traffic. Fun Fact: In 2009, Kalamazoo’s Vine neighborhood was voted one of This Old House Magazine’s “Best Places to Buy an Old House” editor’s picks!

Bronson Park
Bronson Park, located in downtown Kalamazoo is a historical centerpiece of the community. Named after Titus Bronson, the park includes historic attractions such as the Indian mound, which was built by the first native people of Kalamazoo. The park also includes other historic sites, including a fountain by Alfonso Iannelli that depicts the progression of the growth of Kalamazoo, Kirk Newman’s sculpture called “The children may safely play,” and is the site of President Lincoln’s only public speech in Michigan.

Kalamazoo Regional Psychiatric Hospital Water Tower
Located on Oakland Drive near Western Michigan University’s historical East Campus, the tower is connected to the Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital. The tanks in the tower are no longer in use. The tower built in 1895 is a “Queen Anne” style tower and is easily visible throughout the city.
Historic Districts
Kalamazoo is home to 12 historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Nine of these districts are located in or near downtown Kalamazoo and include several historic neighborhoods such as the Vine, Stuart, South Street and Rose districts. In these historical areas, the diverse architectural styles include Greek Revival, Late Victorian, Queen Ann, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Colonial and more. For a full listing of historic districts and buildings in Kalamazoo, visit the National Register of Historic Places.

Frank Lloyd Wright Houses
The historic houses located in Parkwyn Village in southwest Kalamazoo were all designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright and his firm in the 1940s. These houses are examples of Wright's Usonian style of home and are considered to be a hint to how Wright's unbuilt Broadacre City could have looked.

Celery Flats
Highlighting the history of Kalamazoo County, Celery Flats in Portage features several historical buildings that demonstrate the rich history of Kalamazoo Count. These buildings include:

- **Stuart Manor**: Built by William Welch in 1846, this “four-square” Greek Revival house is the oldest remaining structure in Portage. It was the summer home to the second Michigan U.S. Senator Charles Stuart and hosts Portage’s Historic Tea Parties.
- **The Schoolhouse**: A single-room school house built in 1856.
- **Hayloft Theatre**: A turn-of-the-last-century barn that functioned as a theater in the late 1940s. The building was relocated to the Celery Flats Historical Area, restored as a theater and offers cultural programming during the summertime.

Celery Flats also features an amphitheater, gazebo, and canoes and kayaks for group rentals during summertime excursions down Portage Creek.

W. K. Kellogg Manor House
The Manor House served as the former summer estate to cereal magnate W.K. Kellogg and his wife Dr. Carrie Staines Kellogg. It was built on the highest point overlooking Gull Lake in 1925-1926. Restored to its original grandeur in 2000, the Manor House is now used to host events including special teas, lunches, dinners, weddings and more.
269 Cool Things to Do in Area Code 269™

Two-hundred-sixty-nine is not just the area code for Kalamazoo County. It is also the number of unique, off-the-map activities that people can explore in southwest Michigan!

With all the greater Kalamazoo area has to offer, there are much more than 269 things to do, but the list gives visitors a place to start. No. 269 is just as cool as No. 1 — we just had to start somewhere.

Find where you can make your own wine, visit an alligator sanctuary, catch an independent film or get the best, juiciest burger! Our residents and visitors shared their favorite secrets, and that's how we populated the list!

Other items on the list include:

20 Arcadia Brewing
Battle Creek
(269) 963-9690

I’ll never forget the time I saw Tab Benoit in concert here - intimate venue with good MI beer.

120 Michigan Maritime Museum
South Haven
(269) 637-8078

178 Breakfast at Tiffin’s
Kalamazoo
(269) 3815111

The Pancake Wrap: eggs, sausage and cheese wrapped in a huge buttermilk pancake. Amazing. If you eat nothing else while in Kalamazoo, eat this! – Becky S.

71 US 131 Motorsports Park
Martin
(269) 672-7800

Most Friday nights anyone can go and drag race down the “Fastest Track in Michigan.” – Stephanie P.

112 Geocaching
Throughout area code 269
geocaching.com

Geocaching is great fun for any group, singles, couples and families. Not only does it get you outside and moving, but it’s a bit of a treasure hunt and it helps you discover great new places. As someone who’s recently relocated to the Kalamazoo, I’m looking forward to a few of these to get me around the area! – Jen B.

Facebook.com/DiscoverKalamazoo
Twitter.com/DiscoverKzoo
Pinterest.com/DiscoverKzoo/269-cool-things-to-do

Annual Events

January
• Kalamazoo Beer Week
  http://www.kalamazoobeerweek.com/
• Kalamazoo Chili Cook Off
  www.downtownkalamazoo.org/

February
• Teen Filmmaker Festival
  http://www.kpl.gov/

March
• Fretboard Festival
  http://www.kvm.kvcc.edu/
• Kalamazoo Living History Show
  www.kalamazooshow.com/
• Maple Sugar Festival
  www.naturecenter.org/
• St. Patrick’s Day Parade
  http://www.kalamazoocity.org/

April
• Bach Festival
  http://www.kzoo.edu/bach/
• Gilmore Keyboard Festival
  (Biennial, even years)
  http://www.gilmorekeyboardfestival.org/

May
• Kalamazoo Marathon
  http://thekalamazoomarathon.com/
• Medieval Congress
  http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/
• Memorial Day Parade
  http://www.central-city.net/
• National Travel and Tourism Week
  www.discoverkalamazoo.com/
• W. Mich. Apple Blossom Cluster Dog Show
  http://www.midogshows.com/

June
• Art on the Mall
  www.downtownkalamazoo.org/
• Arts Fair
  www.kiarts.org/
• Do-Dah Parade
  http://www.downtownkalamazoo.org/
• Greek Festival
  www.kalamazoogreekfest.com/
• Irish Festival
  www.kalamazooirish.org/
• Island Festival
  www.islandfestkalamazoo.com/
• Kalamazoo Pride
  www.kglrc.org/pride/
• Taste of Portage
  www.portagemi.gov/
• UKC Premier and Ultimate Air Dog Show
  http://www.ukcdogs.com/
• Vicksburg Old Car Festival
  www.vicksburgoldcarfestival.com/

July
• Black Arts Festival
  http://www.blackartskalamazoo.org/
• Blues Fest
  http://www.kvba.org/
• Kindleberger Summer Festival
  www.kindleberger.org/
• R&B/Funk Music Fest
  http://www.vicspremierentertainment.com/
• Taste of Kalamazoo
  www.tasteofkalamazoo.com/
August
• Kalamazoo County Fair
  http://www.kalcounty.com/
• Rib Fest
  www.riifestkalamazoo.com/

September
• Street Rod Nationals NORTH Plus
  http://www.nsra-usa.com/

October
• Oktoberfest
  www.vineneighborhood.org/
• Olde Tyme Harvest Festival
  www.discoverkalamazoo.com/

November
• Holiday Parade
  www.downtownkalamazoo.org/

December
• New Year's Fest
  www.newyearsfest.com/

Recreation and Parks
• Water fun: Outdoor activities are plentiful in Kalamazoo, no matter what time of year. Fish, swim, waterski, sail or boat in one of Kalamazoo County’s more than 80 lakes with public access — or visit the sandy shores of Lake Michigan, which is just a 45 minute drive or three-hour bike ride away on the Kal-Haven Trail.

• Kal-Haven Trail: The Kal-Haven Trail was the former Kalamazoo and South Haven Railroad track, which has been converted into a biking/hiking/snowmobile/cross-country skiing trail. It runs 33.5 miles from Kalamazoo’s west side to the Lake Michigan shoreline city of South Haven. The trail is free to use.

• Kalamazoo River Valley Trail: This is the newest Kalamazoo County Park. It has a paved-asphalt surface that is 12-feet wide and is a multi-purpose trail for non-motorized transportation and recreation. Currently, there are 22 miles of trail completed, eventually the trail will encompass 35 miles of trail throughout Kalamazoo County and will connect Battle Creek to Lake Michigan.

• Bronson Park: This park in downtown Kalamazoo is complete with a band shell and a large cascading fountain in the center. It is host to many community events and concerts throughout the year and is a beautiful spectacle come the holiday season.

• Mayor’s Riverfront Park: This community park is equipped with a baseball diamond, football/soccer field, playground, as well as a canoe launch and fish dock.

• Portage Creek Bicentennial Park: Spanning over 200 acres, Portage Creek Bicentennial Park is a linear facility that runs between the center of Portage and the northern city limits, connected by a 3.5-mile multi-use trail. PCBP totals more than 8 miles of hiking/biking trails with several areas to view scenic Portage Creek.
• **Celery Flats: This historical Portage park** is connected to PCBP. It is home to several historic buildings which highlight Kalamazoo County's rich agricultural history. The park also features a +150-year-old one-room school house, an amphitheater, the Hayloft Theatre, and Stuart Manor, which the oldest structure in Portage, dating to 1846.

• **Millennium Park:** Located in the heart of Portage’s shopping district, Millennium Park is home to the first outdoor ice rink in southwest Michigan. In the summer months, it is transformed into a beautiful reflecting pond.

• **Yankee Springs Recreation Area:** This expansive, rural recreation area north of Kalamazoo features lakes (including Gun Lake) and offers hiking, swimming, and boating opportunities, mountain biking trails, as well as a 200-site modern family campground. Open spring through fall.

• **Fort Custer Recreation Area:** Located in Augusta between Battle Creek and Kalamazoo, Fort Custer features three lakes, the Kalamazoo River, second-growth forests, prairie restoration areas, a 219-site campground, and a multi-use trail system used by mountain bikers, equestrians, hikers, and dog-sledders.

• **Bittersweet Ski Resort:** All levels of skiers and snowboarders can enjoy 20 runs, a 350-foot vertical drop, quad-chair lift and 100 percent snowmaking.

• **Timber Ridge Ski Resort:** With more than 15 runs, take on adventure with skiing, snowboarding and snow tubing. It also offers lessons, artificial snowmaking and a lodge with specialty sandwiches, pizza and drinks.

• **Echo Valley Winter Sports Park:** Get your winter thrills all in one place with 60 mph-toboggan runs, a 400-foot inter-tube sliding hill, 43,000-square-foot outdoor skating rink, warming lodge and viewing deck.
Arts and Entertainment

The arts are very important to the Kalamazoo community. Over the past ten years, more than $80 million has been invested into the local arts and creation of cultural events. Kalamazoo prides itself on the variety of arts that Kalamazoo offers for a community of its size. A large part of the community's success is attributed to the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo. This organization works with a variety of professional artists, amateur artists and arts organizations. The council invests in the arts community through grants and arts education. The Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo puts on the monthly Art Hop which hosts local artists of all styles across various locations in downtown Kalamazoo.

- **Kalamazoo Civic Theatre:** This multi-million-dollar performance space features a variety of shows including comedies, dramas and musicals.

- **Kalamazoo State Theatre:** Built in 1927 for Vaudeville productions, the State Theatre is a great place for live entertainment. The theatre is most often used as a venue for popular concerts and comedians.

- **Chenery Auditorium:** Holding about 1,900 people, it has a rich historical background having been host to famous entertainers including Glenn Miller, Bob Hope, and Johnny Cash. Chenery is also home to the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra.

**Fun Fact:** The Barn Theatre in Augusta is Michigan’s oldest summer stock theatre, founded in 1946. Actors such as Tom Wopat, Melissa Gilbert, Jennifer Garner, Kim Zimmer and Dana Delaney have performed at the barn.

- **Western Michigan University College of Fine Arts:** Accredited in all four areas of fine arts including music, dance, theater and visuals arts. Performances by these departments add about 1,200 shows each year. Western Michigan is home to the Gilmore Theatre Complex and Miller Auditorium. The **Gilmore Theatre Complex** is home to the university theatre program and occasionally, touring productions. It houses three stages: an auditorium style proscenium (Shaw Theatre), and two black box theatres (Williams Theatre and York Theatre).

- **Miller Auditorium:** As west Michigan’s largest auditorium theatre, Miller Auditorium hosts big-name touring Broadway productions, such as “Wicked” and “Les Miserables,” musical ensembles including the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra and the Western Michigan University bands and orchestras, and a diverse collection of touring shows, artists and speakers.
• **Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra:** This orchestra has been bringing the best classical music to the area since 1921. The Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra travels around the Kalamazoo community performing in Miller Auditorium, Chenery, Cityscape and various city parks.

• **Kalamazoo Ballet Company:** Founded in 1969, the Kalamazoo Ballet Company has a commitment to creating and maintaining a variety of shows consisting of traditional, classical and innovative dance.

• **Kalamazoo Institute of Arts:** With a focus on the visual arts of the community, the facility has several galleries in addition to art classes, lectures, and special events.

• **Air Zoo:** The Air Zoo is a world-class, Smithsonian-Affiliated aerospace and science museum with over 60 rare and unique aircraft, and spacecraft. The museum features full-motion flight simulators, inspiring interactive exhibits, indoor amusement park-style rides, a 4D movie theatre and hands-on education programs.

• **Kalamazoo Valley Museum:** Located in downtown Kalamazoo, the museum is owned and operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College. The museum is a great place to learn and interact with Kalamazoo’s rich history. It includes a multimedia theater planetarium and a 2,300-year-old mummy. It holds more than 50,000 artifacts of Kalamazoo’s History from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

• **Gilmore Car Museum** is rated one of the 10 best automobile museums in the country. The museum is located on a 90-acre historic campus and features more than 300 vintage automobiles and motorcycles on display.

• **Kalamazoo Nature Center:** Voted the No. 1 nature center by its peers, the interactive Kalamazoo Nature Center offers educational classes, as well as participates in extensive environmental research and conservation. The nature center includes a tropical sunroom, butterfly house and the Historic DeLano Homestead.

• **Wings Event Center:** A full entertainment venue offering concerts, family shows, trade shows and sporting events. Wings Event Center is home to the Kalamazoo Wings professional hockey team.
Sports
Kalamazoo is the ideal destination for a variety of sporting events. Kalamazoo has opportunities for those who participate in sports or those who just want to relax and watch the game. With over 20 different golf courses Kalamazoo is a golfer’s paradise. For those who enjoy biking, the Kal-Haven Trail and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail offer more than 50 miles of trails. Kalamazoo offers a wide variety of collegiate level sports at both Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College. Kalamazoo offers professional teams in both hockey and football. In addition, regional soccer and national tennis tournaments are contested in Kalamazoo each summer. Sports are prevalent and year round in Kalamazoo.

Teams
Kalamazoo Wings
*Professional Hockey*
Members of the East Coast Hockey League, the KWings have won the North Division title for 3 straight years (2010-2012) and won their most recent conference title in 2011. Games run from October through April.

West Michigan Mayhem
*Professional Women’s Football*
Directly affiliated with The National Women’s Football League, the team won 5 straight division titles from 2006-2010.

Collegiate
Western Michigan University - Broncos
*NCAA Division I*
The university offers 15 varsity sports with membership in the Mid-American Conference (MAC) and Central Collegiate Hockey Association (CCHA).

Kalamazoo College - Hornets
*NCAA Division III*
The college offers 17 sports and is a member of Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC).

Kalamazoo Valley Community College - Cougars
*MCCAA*
The college offers 5 sports and is a member of Michigan Community College Athletic Association.
Tournaments
Each year, Kalamazoo is host to numerous sports tournaments and championships. Its diverse sports infrastructure and multiple collegiate sports programs make help to bring in a variety local and nation level events.

**USTA Boy’s National Championships**
Since 1942, the United States Tennis Association Boys 16’s & 18’s National Championships have been held at the WMU and Kalamazoo College tennis courts. Many of the country’s top male tennis players for the last half century have come through Kalamazoo including Jimmy Connors, John McEnroe, Michael Chang, Jim Courier, Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, and Andy Roddick.

**Kalamazoo also annually hosts**
- United Kennel Club PREMIER Dog Show
- Great Lakes Lacrosse Invitational
- Kalamazoo Invitational Soccer Showcase

**Other major tournaments in recent years include:**
- 2008 Professional Disc Golf Association World Championships
- 2010 USA Curling National Championships
- 2011 American Collegiate Hockey Association Women’s Division I and II Championships
- 2013 US Figure Skating Midwest & Pacific Coast Synchronized Skating Sectionals
- 2013 Men’s & Women’s Division III National Tennis Championships (May)
- 1980-2012 Big League Softball World Series
- 2008 Professional Disc Golf Association World Championships
- 2015 USA Curling National Championships
- 2015 PDGA Amateur & Junior Disc Golf World Championships
Breweries and Wineries

Spirit of 269™

Our 269 area code in southwest Michigan offers more than 35 wineries, 34 breweries, 7 distilleries and 6 hard cider locations with more planned to open in 2016. To learn more about all of these locations, take a look at our Spirit of 269™ brochure for listings and our area spirits map.
http://www.discoverkalamazoo.com/spiritof269/

Give a Craft™ Beer Trail

The beer culture is in full force in Kalamazoo. It’s a large part of our community. It’s part of our lifestyle. It’s part of the fabric of this town we call home. With 12 breweries and counting, Kalamazoo is quickly becoming a craft beer destination. What better way to celebrate than with a beer trail?

The Give a Craft™ beer trail is a fun way to experience Kalamazoo’s beer scene. Trekkers can pick up a passport at participating breweries or Discover Kalamazoo to begin their adventure. For more information, visit DiscoverKalamazoo.com

Kalamazoo Beer Week

Kalamazoo Beer Week is a weeklong series of events that support the craft beer experience through special tastings, dinners, and interactive events. Patrons will meet the brewers themselves, learn about what it takes to develop these kinds of intricate, highly desired products, and hopefully achieve a greater sense of this market segment that has taken hold of beer drinkers everywhere.
http://www.kalamazoobeerweek.com/

Wineries

Southwest Michigan is nationally known for its rich soil and is good for producing fruit that creates tasty wines and juices. Each Kalamazoo winery brings a unique experience to visitors. Tempo Vino Winery offers visitors a chance to make their own customized wines with personalized labels. The vineyard also features “I’ve Got a Gal in Kalamazoo” House Wines and the ever popular Black Current Merlot. Lawton Ridge Winery is located in the oldest grape-producing region in the state. About half of Michigan’s wine production takes place at the winery with the first vineyards dating back to 1867. Peterson and Sons Winery is one of few wineries in the world that uses old world process to make their wines without chemicals or preservatives and are also believed to be the only winery in the world to wash their grapes prior to crushing.
Accommodations
Kalamazoo offers genuine hospitality to guests visiting the area. The greater Kalamazoo area has more than 3,000 hotel rooms featuring a wide-variety of everything from luxury suites to economy lodging.

- **Central City** is Kalamazoo’s renovated, Art Deco downtown district. Chic restaurants, lively brewpubs, shopping and thriving arts and theater scenes are only steps away from the AAA 4-diamond Radisson Plaza Hotel & Suites.
- **Kalamazoo West** features more than 1,200 full- and select-service hotel rooms. Miller Auditorium with its famous Broadway shows, auto racing/racetracks and three ski resorts nearby.
- **Kalamazoo East** offers more than 1,000 full- and select-service hotel rooms near Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport. Wings Stadium and the Kalamazoo County Expo Center is right around the corner, featuring sporting events, arts and craft shows, exhibits and music events.
- **Specialty Properties** These venues include scenic conference and golf resorts to charming bed and breakfast inns.

- **Bed and Breakfasts**
  - Hall House Bed and Breakfast
  - Henderson Castle
  - The Kalamazoo House
  - Kara’s Kottages
  - The Oaklands
  - Stuart Avenue Inn

Location
Kalamazoo is conveniently located at the crossroads of I-94 and U.S. 131. There are many ways to get to Kalamazoo and even more ways to get around the area.

<table>
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Who’s Who from Kalamazoo

Sports

• **Derek Jeter (1974-)** *Baseball* - Jeter moved to Kalamazoo when he was 4 years old and attended Kalamazoo Central High School. He excelled in baseball and won many awards from the Kalamazoo community and received national recognition as a high school student. He currently plays for the New York Yankees.

• **Greg Jennings (1983-)** *Football* - Jennings was born in Kalamazoo, went to Kalamazoo Central High School and attended Western Michigan University. He played for the NFL’s Green Bay Packers for 7 seasons during which time the team won Superbowl XLV. He was ranked #56 in the Top 100 players of 2012 and now plays for the Minnesota Vikings.

• **Jason Babin (1980-)** *Football* - Babin was born in Kalamazoo, went to Paw Paw High School, and attended Western Michigan University. He was twice recognized as MAC Conference Defensive Player of the Year and was drafted by the Houston Texans in the first round of the 2004 NFL Draft. He was ranked #44 in the Top 100 players of 2012 and currently plays for the Jacksonville Jaguars.

• **Lindsay Tarpley (1983-)** *Soccer* - Tarpley attended Portage Central High School where she was honored with several state and national honors in soccer. She later attended the University of North Carolina where she received numerous national honors and awards, including her #25 jersey being retired by the school. She played for several professional teams and the United States National Team (2003-2011). Tarpley played for the 2004 and 2008 Olympic Gold Medal teams.

• **Louis Delmas (1987-)** *Football* - Delmas played football for Western Michigan University. He was the first pick in the second round of the 2009 NFL Draft by the Detroit Lions where he currently plays.

• **Kevin VanDam (1967-)** *Fishing* - VanDam, a Kalamazoo native and current resident, is one of the most decorated professional fisherman of all time and is the sports all-time money winner. He has won 7 Bass Angler of the Year awards, the first-ever Outdoorsman of the Year ESPY Award, 4 Bassmaster Classic Championships, and 11 of the last 14 Michigan Fishing Association Awards.

• **Adam Hall (1980-)** *Hockey* - Hall was born in Kalamazoo and attended Kalamazoo Central High school. He has played for several NHL teams and currently plays for the Tampa Bay Lightning. He has also represented the USA in 5 Ice Hockey World Championships and 2 Junior World Championships.

Discover Kalamazoo
141 East Michigan Ave. Suite 100
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
DiscoverKalamazoo.com
Arts

• **Donald S. Gilmore** (1885-1979) and **Genevieve Upjohn Gilmore** (1895 – 1990) *Philanthropists* - Donald, a former CEO of the Upjohn Company, and his wife, Genevieve, daughter of the founder of the Upjohn Company can be attributed with much of the strength of the arts in Kalamazoo. The Gilmores donated money to help establish the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts and the money for its home on South Park Street. They also created the foundation for the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra as well as the Kalamazoo Civic Players. The funds for the Gilmore Car Museum as well as cars from their personal collection were also donated by the couple.

• **Irving S. Gilmore** (1905-1986) *Musician & Philanthropist* – Irving was born and raised Kalamazoo. He attended Yale University, where the university music library is now named after him, but returned to Kalamazoo shortly after. Irving is the founder of the Gilmore Foundation and the Gilmore Keyboard Festival.

• **Thomas Schippers** (1930-1977) *Conductor* - Born in Portage in the 1930s, Schippers started taking piano lessons at the age of 4 and graduated high school by the age of 13. He is most notable for his work as a conductor. He conducted New York’s Metropolitan Opera, The New York Philharmonic and The Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 1955, he won the Tony award for best conductor and musical director for "The Saint of Bleecker Street."

• **Edna Ferber** (1885-1968) *Author* - Born in 1885 in Kalamazoo, Ferber was a Pulitzer Prize winning author for her book “So Big”. Another novel she wrote, "Show Boat" was the inspiration for the famous musical.

• **Jaimy Gordon** (1944- ) *Author* - Gordon is an author who wrote the “Lord of Misrule,” which made her the winner of the 2010 National Book Award for Fiction. She is a professor of English at Western Michigan University.

• **Joseph McGinty Nichol** (1968- ) *Film Director/Producer* – Nichol, known as “McG”, was born in Kalamazoo and is best known for directing films like Charlie’s Angels, Charlie’s Angels: Full Throttle, and Terminator Salvation and producing TV shows such as The O.C., Chuck, and Supernatural.

• **Terry Crews** (1968- ) *Actor & Football* – After attending Interlochen Center for the Arts on scholarship, Crews went to Western Michigan University where he received a BA in Art. He also was an all-conference defensive end for the Broncos. After college, Crews went on to play in the NFL for several teams from 1991-1996. He later began a career in acting where he is best known for his roles in the films such as the Expendables film series, White Chicks, The Longest Yard, and Bridesmaids and the TV series Everybody Hates Chris and Are We There Yet and. He is also known for his roles in the Old Spice commercials and for the TV show The Family Crews which followed the daily life of Crews and his Family.
• **Terry Rossio** (1960- ) *Screenwriter* – Born in Kalamazoo, Rossio is best known for his role in writing popular movies such as the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series, *Shrek*, *Treasure Planet*, *The Mask of Zoro* and *The Legend of Zoro*.

• **Tim Allen** (1953- ) *Actor & Comedian*– Allen attended Western Michigan University where he received a BS in Communications with a minor in Philosophy and Design. He was later awarded an honorary fine arts degree and the Distinguished Alumni Award. Allen is best known for his work in the TV shows *Home Improvement* and *Last Man Standing*, his movies *Galaxy Quest*, the *Santa Clause* films, and the *Toy Story* films, as well as his stand-up comedy. Allen is also the voice of the Pure Michigan ad campaign.

**Business**

• **Will Keith Kellogg** (1860-1951) Born in Battle Creek, Will Kellogg started The Kellogg Company with his brother John. Together the brothers created the process of making flaked cereal. In 1930, after becoming one of the world's wealthiest men, he donated most of his fortune, $66 million, to establish the Kellogg Foundation. Beginning in the several counties around Kalamazoo, the foundation now helps children around the world and continues to support our public schools and other charitable foundation and initiatives in Kalamazoo County.

• **Homer Stryker** (1894-1980) Born and raised in Athens, MI, Stryker first came to Kalamazoo to attend Western State Normal School (now Western Michigan University) and returned after receiving a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Michigan Medical School. He was the founder of the Stryker Corporation and inventor of the mobile hospital bed, the oscillating electric saw to safely remove casts and the oscillating electric bone saw for cutting bone but not tissue.

• **William Upjohn** (1853-1932) Settled in Kalamazoo, Upjohn was a doctor who founded the Upjohn Pharmaceutical Company. Later, the company merged with Pharmacia and is now Pfizer. Upjohn invented the first dissolvable pill and the means for its mass production.

• **Orville Gibson** (1856-1918) - Gibson began the Gibson Guitar Company out of his home workshop in 1894 and by 1902, with the help of several businessmen, formed Gibson Mandolin-Guitar Mfg. Co., Ltd (later becoming Gibson Guitar Corp.). Today, the Gibson brand is considered by many to best in the industry.
Other notable people who were born or lived in Kalamazoo include:

- **Jordan White** – Football player for the NFL New York Jets – WMU alumnus
- **Stephen Lynch** – Comedic singer/songwriter and actor - WMU alumnus.
- **Susan Anthony** – Opera soprano – WMU alumna
- **Meredith Arwady** – Grammy award winning opera singer – Loy Norrix High School graduate.
- **T.J. Duckett** – Former football player NFL Atlanta Falcons and Detroit Lions – Loy Norrix High School graduate.
- **J.C Harrison** – Football player NFL Cleveland Browns and Detroit Lions – Kalamazoo Central graduate.
- **Bill Hybels** – Founder of Willow Creek Church, Chicago (4th largest church in U.S.) - Graduate of Kalamazoo Christian High School.
- **Dr. Norman Shumway** – Performed 1st successful heart transplant in U.S. - Born in Kalamazoo.
- **Mike Squires** – Baseball player MLB Chicago White Sox - Kalamazoo Central graduate and WMU alumnus.
- **Narada Michael Walden** – Multi-platinum record producer and songwriter (Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross, and Starship), drummer for Jeff Beck, and has performed at the White House - Graduate of Plainwell High School.
- **John W. Brown** – CEO of Stryker Corporation from 1977–2004
- **Bruce Campbell** – Television (*Burn Notice*) and film (*The Evil Dead, Spiderman* (1 – 3) actor, producer, writer, and director - Attended WMU.
- **Jack Clifford** – Founder of the Food Network - WMU alumnus.
- **Caroline Bartlett Crane** – Prominent writer, social activist and minister in Kalamazoo, known as “America’s Housekeeper,” Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame – Ran a ministry in Kalamazoo
- **Jill Dobson** – Former FOX News Channel Entertainment Correspondent - Worked as a general assignment reporter at WWMT NewsChannel3.
- **David Feldberg** – National Disc Golf Champion - Plainwell High School graduate and WMU alumnus.
• **Dr. Tim Fischell** – Cardiologist and holds over 60 medical patents - Director of cardiovascular research at Borgess Medical Center.

• **Matt Giraud** – 5th place in Season 8 of American Idol (2009) - WMU alumnus and local dueling piano player.

• **John Grogan** – Journalist and author (Marley & Me) – Worked for the Kalamazoo Gazette

• **John Harbaugh** – Head coach of NFL Baltimore Ravens - Began his coaching career as an assistant coach at WMU.

• **Paul Harvey** – Legendary radio commentator for ABC - Worked at WKZO radio as a program director in the 1940s

• **James Holden** – Former CEO of Chrysler - WMU alumnus.

• **Mary Jackson** – Actress best known as one of Baldwin sisters on TV's *The Waltons* - WMU alumna

• **Louise Little** – Malcolm X's mother (real name Malcolm Little). She suffered a nervous breakdown and was sent to the Kalamazoo State Hospital in 1937 for twenty-six years, until her release.

• **Marin Mazzie** – Tony nominated Broadway actress - WMU alumna.

• **James McDivitt** – NASA astronaut in the Gemini and Apollo space programs - Graduated from Kalamazoo Central High School

• **Jason Newsted** – Former bass player for Metallica, Voivod and Rock Star Supernova – Graduate of Gull Lake High School.

• **Melvin Purvis** – Famous FBI “G-Man" who lead manhunts and is credited with the capture of Public Enemy #1 - John Dillinger, as well as Baby Face Nelson and Pretty Boy Floyd. Purvis was portrayed by Christian Bale in the 2009 film *Public Enemies*. Purvis lived in Kalamazoo in 1943 while teaching police tactics at Fort Custer.

• **Tony Scheffler** – Football player NFL Detroit Lions - Played football at WMU

• **Dave Thomas** – Late founder of Wendy's - Attended elementary school in Kalamazoo

• **Luther Vandross** – Winner of 8 Grammy Awards, singer-songwriter and record producer - WMU alumnus.
Going Green in Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo County strives to be environmentally conscious for the community and its visitors. Kalamazoo along with Western Michigan University (WMU) and Kalamazoo College are paving the way for a sustainable community.

“Green” Awards and Recognitions:

• Bell’s Brewery has been recognized for its sustainability efforts including the no-till farming practices of its Shepherd, MI farm, the “earthchoice” cups used at the Eccentric Café, the modular extensive sedum green roof, and a new 85-ton geothermal field. Bell’s even employs a full time Sustainability Coordinator.

• Arcadia Brewery was featured in National Geographic for its involvement in the Natural Resources Defense Council's Brewers for Clean Water initiative. The brewery's location in Kalamazoo cuts water use by 25 to 30 percent by recycling waste water.

• In 2011, Kalamazoo’s City Hall was outfitted with a 4,600 square foot green roof.

• In June 2007 Kalamazoo College was the second school in Michigan to sign the American College and University President Climate Commitment Green Initiatives.

• The College of Health and Human Services building at WMU is LEED Gold certified. (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)

• In June 2007 Kalamazoo College was the second school in Michigan to sign the American College and University President Climate Commitment Green Initiatives.

• WMU now requires all construction projects exceeding $1 million to incorporate, at a minimum, LEED Sliver design principles.

• The John Gibbs house built in 1853 and is registered on the National Register of Historic Places is now owned by WMU Business Research and Technology Park. The house is currently used for environmental research by university students.

• Southwest Michigan has its own Regional Sustainably Covenant, including a mission for local businesses to demonstrate environmental stewardship, economic viability and social responsibility. Periodic meetings and forums are held to discuss community sustainability and to learn more about ways to stay environmentally conscious.

• Eat Local, Kalamazoo is a series of events put on by Fair Food Matters to help educate and build awareness in the Kalamazoo Community about the benefits of eating locally.
Story Ideas
While this kit is full of potential story ideas from events to locations to our rich history, here are several interesting topics for use.

**History of the Automobile in Kalamazoo:** From the Checker Cab and Barley Motor companies to the Gilmore Car Museum to a nineteenth century community’s transition to a modern city, Kalamazoo has a rich auto history. In 1905, Kalamazoo had even more auto manufactures than Detroit at 17!

**Things to Do within an Hour Drive:** The 269 Things to Do guide, is loaded with ideas for a night out, a weekend get-a-way, special occasions, or not-so-special occasions. No matter your target audience or the season, the guide will have you covered.

**Art Hop:** On the first Friday of every month, downtown Kalamazoo hosts many local artists at an event attended by thousands of locals. The event is Art Hop and is a great idea for anyone looking to get out and about on a weekend and for those interested in arts and culture.

**The Agricultural History of Kalamazoo:** Once the world’s largest supplier of celery, Kalamazoo County is now one of the largest suppliers of bedding plants. With several successful farmers markets in the Kalamazoo area, the community shows support and interest in local food.

**Food Tour and Local Food:** Downtown Kalamazoo is known for its diverse local restaurants. Being located in the region that leads the state in agriculture gives Kalamazoo a unique advantage for creative chefs to capitalize on. Michigan.org features a food tour of 13 unique local restaurants, most of which include locally grown food on the menu ([http://www.michigan.org/road-trips/fresh-to-you-from-kalamazoo](http://www.michigan.org/road-trips/fresh-to-you-from-kalamazoo)). A single restaurant or several could be featured to grab readers and promote local eats.

**Food on the Go:** Whether you’re grabbing Sweetwater Doughnuts for breakfast, Gorilla Gourmet for lunch, Plainwell Ice Cream for a frozen treat, or Taste of Heaven for that mid-day dessert, Kalamazoo has variety of local quick food options. What is your favorite quick bite and picnic spot?
**Rise of a Beer Culture:** With a massive boom in the craft brewing business over the last several years, craft brew is commanding the beer scene. For the last several years, Kalamazoo has only had a few breweries but within the next year, that number is expected to double. Beer fans in Kalamazoo recently rallied to bring the title of “Beer City, USA” to the town and took second place among 40 nominated cities. Story ideas could include what it’s like to be in a market crash at the Kalamazoo Beer Exchange, a brewery tour of one of the new breweries or a spotlight on Bell’s Brewery as the first craft brewery east of Colorado and now the largest brewery in the state and 7th largest craft brewery in the nation.

**Best Bike Tours and Stops:** With nearly 100 miles of maintained trails and bikeways in the county with many more bike friendly roadways, the region is built for cyclists. From geocaching and family outings to fitness biking and distance touring, Kalamazoo’s bike scene has something interesting for everyone. Be sure to check out the Kal-Haven Trail, the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, the Portage Bikeway or one of the 5 area bike shops.

**Kalamazoo River Valley Trail:** The trail is nearing completion and is the project of millions of dollars of public and private funding. When completed, it will be part of a planned lake-to-lake tail way.

**An Experience at Kalamazoo Nature Center:** Located only about 10 minutes north of downtown Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Nature Center is the perfect place to take the family, go for a nature walk or just listen to the birds sing. The center is also home to the annual Maple Sugar Festival where you can welcome in the first signs of spring with a weekend of events including a pancake breakfast, maple sugar tours, live birds of prey presentations, and demonstrations such as pioneer sugaring and blacksmithing.

**Exceptional Golfing:** With over 20 golf courses in the county and many more nearby, Kalamazoo is a haven for golfers. Story ideas here could include featuring your favorite course, the annual Golf Show in March or including our many golf courses in a weekender special.
Area Awards, Recognitions, and Rankings

Kalamazoo ranked as the “#3 Beer Town”
*Business Insider* - 2013

Kalamazoo named one of the “8 undervalued beer cities in the world”.
*U.S. World News and Report* - 2014

Kalamazoo is ranked second place for “BeerCity, USA 2013”
*Examiner.com* - 2013

Bell’s Brewery has 4 beers in the Top 5 Beers in the world
*RateBeer.com* – 2013, 2014 and 2015

Bell’s Brewery is rated the “5th Best Brewery in the World”
*RateBeer.com* - 2013

Bell’s Brewery is ranked:
- Largest brewery in Michigan
- 7th largest craft brewery nationally
- 14th largest general brewery nationally
*Brewer’s Association* - 2013

Kalamazoo Beer Exchange is rated “Best Bar in Michigan”
*RateBeer.com* – 2013, 2014 and 2015

Bronson Methodist Hospital is rated as a “Top 100 Hospital” nationally
*Both Beckers Hospital Review and Healthgrades* – 2013

Kalamazoo, Portage and Richland are all designated “Tree City”
*The Arbor Day Foundation* - 2013

Kalamazoo named one of “Top 29 Cities in the World for Twentysomethings” - *Buzzfeed* - 2015

Kalamazoo named one of “Top “Ten Cities for Creatives”
*Smartasset.com* – 2015

Kalamazoo College is ranked a “Top 100 Liberal Arts College”
*Both US News and Forbes* - 2012

Kalamazoo College is rated “Top Liberal Arts College in the State”
*Washington Monthly* - 2012

The area’s health care is rated “Top 100 in the US”
*Commonwealth Fund* - 2012

Kalamazoo Music Scene ranked 8th among smaller metros
*Martin Prosperity Index* - 2012

Kalamazoo is ranked 4th in “Top 10 Best Cities for Cheapskates”
*Kiplinger’s Personal Finance* - 2012

Kalamazoo is rated “5th Most Affordable College Town in the Country”
*Coldwell Banker Real Estate* - 2012

Kalamazoo is ranked in “100 Best Communities for Young People”
*America’s Promise Alliance* – 2012
Certified Tourism Ambassador Program

The Certified Tourism Ambassador Program is a ground-breaking, nationwide certification program that serves to increase tourism by training and inspiring front-line hospitality employees and volunteers to work together to turn every visitor encounter into a positive experience. The program now has thousands of members nationwide in 18 CTA programs across 17 states and involves hundreds of destination marketing organization (DMOs).

Kalamazoo’s Tourism Ambassador Program

Kalamazoo launched its regional CTA program in October of 2010 and has since awarded the CTA certification to more than 350 Kalamazoo tourism employees and volunteers.

The Kalamazoo Tourism Ambassador Program is an interactive program to educate and inspire front-line employees and volunteers so they may turn every visitor encounter into a positive experience. When visitors have a positive experience, they are most likely to return and tell their friends and family – boosting the local economy, positively impacting the Kalamazoo County brand and our overall image as an exciting destination.

Becoming a CTA

To become a Certified Tourism Ambassador™, participants must complete half day class with outside read included and pay a one-time application fee of $25. To remain a CTA, an annual renewal fee of $15 is required.

For more information on the program and to sign up for classes, please visit us online at: http://www.discoverkalamazoo.com/tourismambassador/
Media and Visitor Resources
Log on to DiscoverKalamazoo.com to find information about attractions, accommodations, dining, shopping, an up-to-date calendar of events and much more.

About Discover Kalamazoo
Discover Kalamazoo is the official destination marketing organization for Kalamazoo County. Discover Kalamazoo features a staff of sales, service and communications professionals whose mission is to market and sell Kalamazoo County as a distinctive visitor experience to positively impact the area's economy.

Discover Kalamazoo Brand Identity: Kalamazoo You'll be back. We promise.

General Contact Information
Discover Kalamazoo
141 E. Michigan Avenue, Suite 100
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Telephone: (800) 888-0509
www.DiscoverKalamazoo.com

Discover Kalamazoo Media Contact
Renee Newman, CTA
Director of Marketing & Communications
rnewman@discoverkalamazoo.com
(269) 488-0059

Information Line: For up-to-date information on what's happening in around town, call the Visitor Information Line toll-free at (800) 888-0509 to speak to one of our friendly information specialists, who are on duty Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time.

Visitor Information: To obtain Visitor information or maps contact Discover Kalamazoo at (800) 888-0509 or visit our visitor information centers located at 141 E. Michigan Ave., Suite 100 or the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport. Guests can always visit any area hotel front desk information displays.

Kalamazoo Store: “Yes, There really is a Kalamazoo” souvenirs are available downtown at the Discover Kalamazoo offices Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time. Browse through the gift shop, community brochure displays or watch our visitor video to discover what the region has to offer.