



AGENDA
MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP
COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
March 22, 2023 6:00 PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PUBLIC REMARKS
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. January 11, 2023 Special Meeting DRAFT Minutes
6. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER REPORT
 - A. 2023 1st Quarter Report
7. COMMISSION MEMBERS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - A. Chair's Report
 - B. Township Board Liaison's Report
 - C. Commissioner Reports
8. ACTION ITEMS
9. DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - A. HOMTV Operating Policies Revision
10. COMMUNICATIONS
 - A. Compliments/Complaints
 - B. Correspondences
11. REPORTS
 - A. Video Service Provider(s)
 - B. Programming
 - i. Program Totals and Video On-Demand Analytics
 - C. Website & Social Media
 - i. Website Analytics
 - ii. Social Media Analytics
 - D. Promotions/Publications
 - i. Family Fun Guide
 - E. Finance
 - F. HOMTV Internship/Alumni
12. PUBLIC REMARKS
13. ADJOURNMENT

All comments limited to 3 minutes, unless prior approval for additional time for good cause is obtained from the Commission Chair.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Communications Department; Communications Manager, Brandie Yates, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4208 - Ten Day Notice is Required.
Meeting Location: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 Administrative Conference Room



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

Communications Commission Special Meeting **DRAFT** minutes

Wednesday, January 11 | 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Chair, Brian Seipel; Commissioner, Leslie Charles; Commissioner, Lisa Whiting-Dobson
ABSENT: Vice Chair, Walter Benenson; Alternate Commissioner, Mike Nevells
STAFF: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
TOWNSHIP: None
COUNSEL: None
COMCAST/AT&T: None

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Commissioner Seipel called the meeting to order at **6:14 pm**.

Commissioner Charles moved to select a temporary chair to lead the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson.

Commissioner Whiting-Dobson moved to nominate Commissioner Seipel as temporary Chair to lead the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Charles.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Charles moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**. Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Charles moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2022 REGULAR MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER REPORT

Manager Diehl reviewed the 4th quarter report.

The Multimedia Production & Operations Specialist was filled by former HOMTV intern Danneisha McDole.

Road construction updates/social media posts are still being pushed out consistently. Grand River Avenue opened; Okemos Road Bridge construction still underway.

The Town Hall Room underwent a partial installation of new equipment purchased for the upgrade project. Still waiting on one more piece of equipment before project is entirely finished.

Marketing efforts for Township events: Election information, Spooktakular Adventure at the Market, Meridian Historical Village Halloween event, Meridian Police Halloween open house, fall regional electronic recycling event, the Great Divide, Meridian Heritage Festival.

Monsido, a website accessibility tool, was implemented on the Township website.

HOMTV conducted 9 candidate interviews for Your Choice 2022 coverage. A pre-show and results recap show were aired on Election Day and two days after.

New HOMTV lifestyle show, Catching Up with Kenize, was introduced. Intern Mackenize Dekker takes tours of various Meridian Township attractions. The first episode was filmed at High Caliber Karting & Entertainment and the second episode was filmed at the Meridian Historical Village for the Christmas in the Village event.

HOMTV internship program had 3 interns for fall 2022 semester as well as Multimedia Freelancer Courtland Jenkins. Spring 2023 internship will see 3 new interns, 2 returning interns, as well as Multimedia Freelancer Jenkins.

2023 Communications Department Goals were announced. Manager Diehl discussed the possible renovations taking place at the Municipal Building. Mentioned the possibility of upgrading HOMTV equipment during construction. Commissioners Seipel, Charles, and Whiting-Dobson would like to see a preliminary plan of what an upgrade would like.

Manager Diehl and Commissioners Seipel, Charles, and Whiting-Dobson discussed what an emergency communications plan might look like.

7. COMMISSION MEMBERS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Communications Chair:
None.

Township Board Liaison:
None.

Commissioners Report:

Commissioner Whiting-Dobson requested for more communication about and with the various Township Boards & Commissions.

8. ACTION ITEMS

A. Appointment of New Chair

Commissioner Charles moved to appoint Commissioner Seipel as Communications Commissioner Chair. Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson. VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

B. 2023 Communications Commission 2023 Meeting Schedule

Commissioner Charles moved to approve the 2023 Communications Commission meeting. Seconded by Chair Seipel. VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

None

10. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Compliments/Complaints

None.

B. Correspondences

None.

11. REPORTS

A. Video Service Provider(s)

None.

B. Programming

Program totals and video on-demand analytics were shared in the packet.

C. Website & Social Media

Website and social media stats were shared in packet.

D. Promotions/Publications

None.

E. Finance

None.

F. HOMTV Internship/Alumni

None.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Charles moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Whiting-Dobson. VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Seipel adjourned the meeting at 7:20 pm.



**Communications Department
1st Quarter Report
January – March 2023**

Municipal Building Renovation

The Meridian Township Municipal Building will be undergoing an extensive interior renovation beginning April 24, 2023 and lasting until October 2, 2023. The renovation will include new walls for every office and room, new carpeting, and new furniture.

Municipal Building Staff will be relocated to different locations for the duration of the project. Township Manager Frank Walsh allowed employees to choose between vacating in phases or vacating the building all at once, and the majority of employees chose to vacate the building at the same time.

The Town Hall Room will remain open to serve residents who utilize the Municipal Building for its various services. A portion of employees will relocate to the Meridian Township Public Safety Building next door to the Municipal Building. A second portion of employees will relocate to the Meridian Service Center. Finally, a third portion of employees will relocate to a rental building on Bennett Road in Okemos.

During this project, the Communications Department will move into the HOMTV Studio. The HOMTV Server Room and Control Room are in talks to be part of the upgrade. Brian Kusch from Michigan State University will be meeting with Manager Diehl on Tuesday, March 14 to discuss what this would look like.

Leading up to the project, all departments will be packing up their offices and preparing for relocation. Communication through this project will be constant. Once the final contracts have been signed, Communications Staff will release the official notice to residents.

Because of this project and limited relocation space, the spring 2023 HOMTV internship will end on Wednesday, April 19, 2023. Originally, the internship was slated to run through Friday, May 5, 2023.

Staffing Changes

On March 16, Marketing & Public Relations Specialist Andrea Smiley submitted her resignation. Her last day will be on Thursday, March 30. The position was posted on Friday, March 17 and Staff is hoping to have the position filled by the end of April.

Manager Diehl, Operations Specialist McDole, and Human Resources Director Abby Tithof will be on the interview committee.



Communications Department 1st Quarter Report January – March 2023

Newsletter Changes

On March 1, the Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Department unveiled their new newsletter, “The Playbook”. This monthly newsletter will highlight the latest information about Harris Nature Center, Meridian Township Farmers’ Market, Meridian Historical Village, and the Meridian Senior Center. Marketing and Public Relations Specialist Andrea Smiley created the newsletter. It will be maintained by Communications Staff until Parks Staff has received training on how to create and publish the newsletter.

The Township’s main newsletter, Meridian Happenings, is now moving to a bi-weekly schedule. Previously, this newsletter was sent out on a weekly basis. Due to the addition of The Playbook, Communications Staff determined it best to limit the amount of email communications sent to residents. In addition to those newsletters, there is also the Green Gazette that is released monthly.

Road Construction Updates

Communications Staff continues to provide timely road construction updates to residents. This includes intermittent road closures that occur unexpectedly, as well as long-term projects such as the Okemos Road Bridge project. Though the Okemos Road bridge project is estimated to wrap up between March 16-late March, Staff will continue communicating with residents about the project. Temporary lane closures will still be needed from now through summer to complete the finishing touches.





**Communications Department
1st Quarter Report
January – March 2023**

Marketing & Communications

Promotional campaigns for three summer festivals are currently underway: Meridian Freedom Fest honoring Juneteenth, Celebrate Meridian and the Township’s inaugural Pride event.

Celebrate Meridian

The first communications regarding Celebrate Meridian were sent out in February 2023. This included the creation of the Facebook events, Township calendar and webpage updates, a call for sponsors/volunteers, and social media posts announcing the return of Celebrate Meridian. Promotional efforts in the coming months will include press releases, digital paid aids, and video promos to go along with the regularly scheduled social media posts.

Celebrate Meridian will be a two-day event taking place on Friday, June 23 and Saturday, June 24.

Meridian Freedom Fest

The Meridian Freedom Fest honoring Juneteenth will return for its third year and takes place the weekend before Celebrate. The campaign is underway and will be promoted once the flyer design and graphics have been finalized. The webpage has been updated with 2023 information and the events are entered into the Township website. Press releases, digital paid ads, and video promos will also be used.

This event will feature two movie screenings (June 9 & June 16), a Blues & Jazz Festival at Lake Lansing Park South (June 17), and a Historical Spiritual Review at the Meridian Historical Village (June 18).



Meridian Pride

This inaugural event will take place on Saturday, August 26 at the Marketplace on the Green pavilion. The event will feature food trucks, entertainment, a beer and wine tent, a dog parade, art vendors, and more. The webpage is still being developed and will be completed by the end of March. Graphics and flyers are being designed and promotion will begin once the webpage is live. A press release and paid digital ads will be used to further promotion, and all three events have been added to the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitor Bureau’s website.



**Communications Department
1st Quarter Report
January – March 2023**

Marketing & Communications Continued.

Chinese New Year

In January, the Greater Lansing Chinese Association held its first Chinese New Year event since 2019. Staff assisted the Association with promotional efforts that included social media promotion and event coverage. Multimedia Freelancer Courtland Jenkins was in attendance to capture video and photos. The content was edited and shared across Township platforms.



HOMTV Operations

Town Hall Room A/V Upgrades Project

The final piece of equipment needed for the Town Hall Room project is still backordered and expected to arrive by the second quarter. Once the final piece is delivered, two more days of work will be needed before the system is finished.

HOMTV Programming & Internship





**Communications Department
1st Quarter Report
January – March 2023**

Catching Up with Kenize began filming once again, with the third episode taking place at Art Unlimited in Downtown Okemos. Host Makenize Dekker and three HOMTV interns participated in the episode and learned how to paint ceramic mugs.

HOM Entertainment also resumed after the holidays and is being filmed in a different style than previous years. Instead of airing an episode before a scheduled show comes to the Wharton Center, HOMTV has also been filming recap episodes to accompany the pre-show interview. Once HOMTV completes an interview, they are provided with two media tickets to opening night. The day after opening night, HOMTV then films a recap episode where the two attendees discuss their experience at the performance.

The spring 2023 semester of the HOMTV Internship Program consists of three new interns, two returning interns, and Multimedia Freelancer Courtland Jenkins. HOMTV Staff attended a career fair at Michigan State University in February in order to recruit for the summer 2023 semester.



Communications
Commission

Commission Members Reports & Announcements



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Action Items



Communications
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Discussion Items



To: Communications Commission
From: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
Date: March 10, 2023
Re: HOMTV Operating Policies Revision

To stay consistent with policy wording throughout the Township, Communications Staff is recommending an update to the HOMTV Operating Policies. Meridian Township's Human Resources Department is currently updating their policy language to be more inclusive. One such example of this is by using they/them terminology instead of him/her. Currently, the HOMTV Operating Policies do not reflect that change.

Manager Diehl will be working directly with Human Resources Director Abby Tithof to implement this new language, as well as include any additional language that Director Tithof believes should be included. Staff will submit a draft version of the updated HOMTV Operating Policies at the June 14, 2023 Communications Commission meeting.



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Compliments/ Complaints



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Video Service Provider



Communications
Commission

Programming



11Bi.

To: Communications Commission
From: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
Date: March 17, 2023
Re: Program Totals and Video On-Demand Totals

Program Totals (Year to Date):

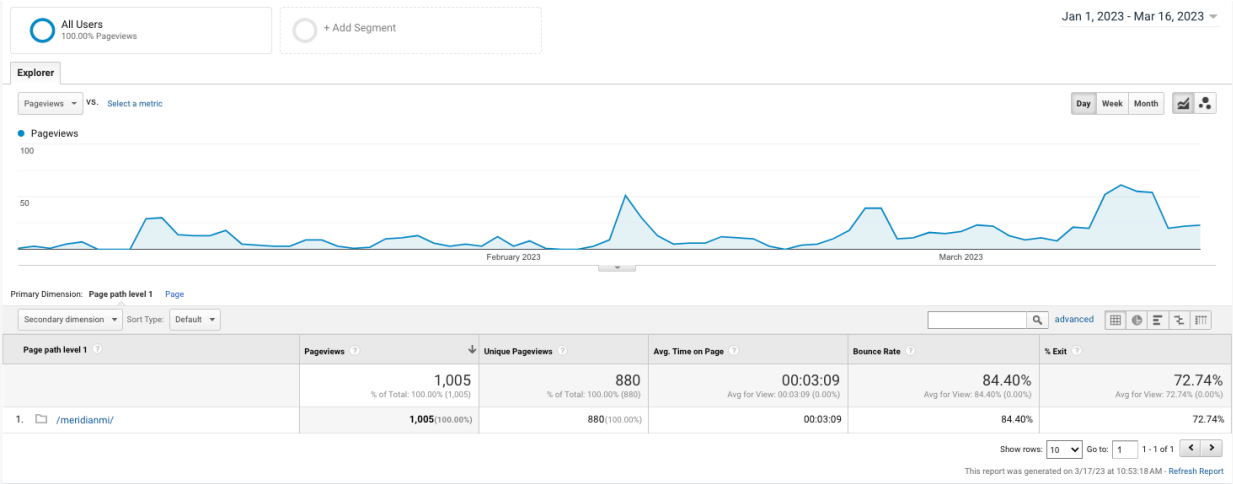
- Meridian Live: 53
 - Township Board: 22
 - Planning Commission: 17
 - Environmental Commission: 7
 - Zoning Board of Appeals: 7
- Catching Up with Kenize: 1
- HOM Entertainment: 4

Video On-Demand Analytics on next page.

Memo to Communications Commission
December 9, 2022
Re: Programming
Page 3

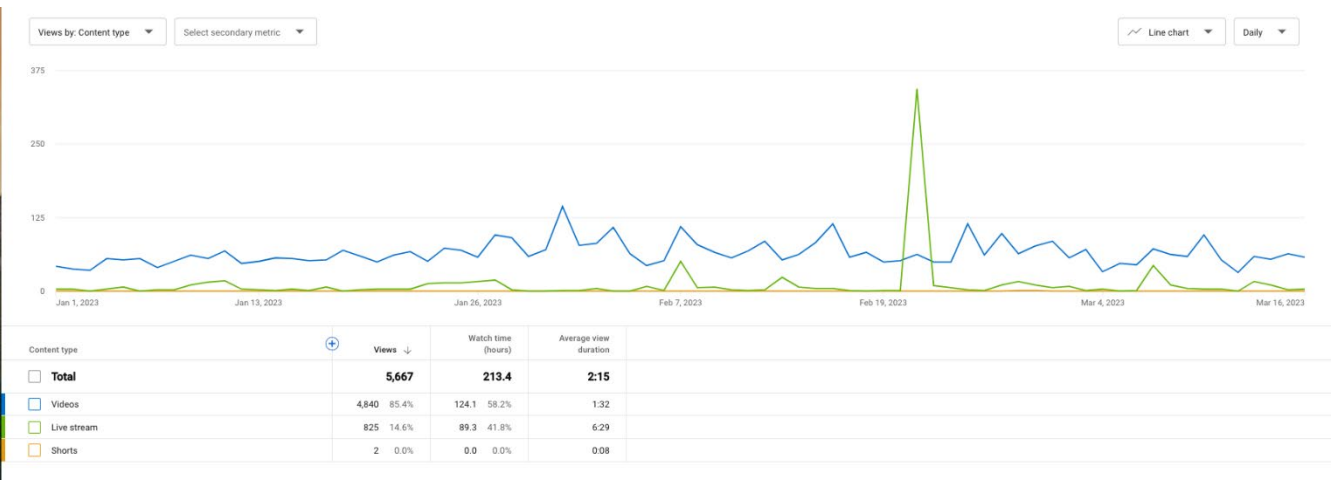
HOMTV Website Video On-Demand (Swagit)

The graph shows that HOMTV on-demand services via Swagit had 1,005 year-to-date pageviews. This number is a 50% increase from the 2022 first quarter stats.



YouTube Live vs. Uploaded Content Stats

This graph shows the amount of HOMTV YouTube views based on uploaded content and live streams. Of the 5,667 total views for the year, 85.4% of those were for uploaded content and 14.6% were for the video streamed live (Township meetings).





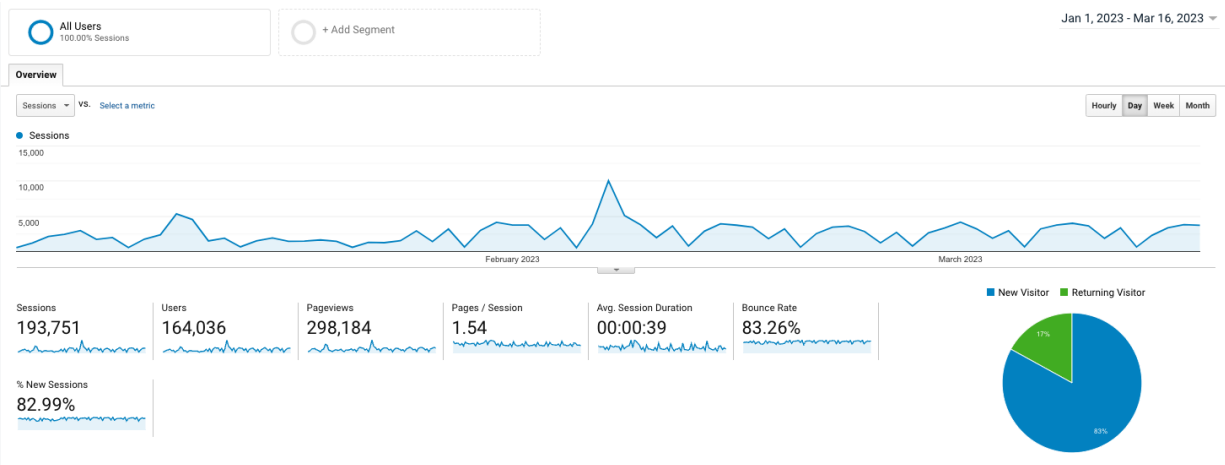
Communications
Commission

Analytics

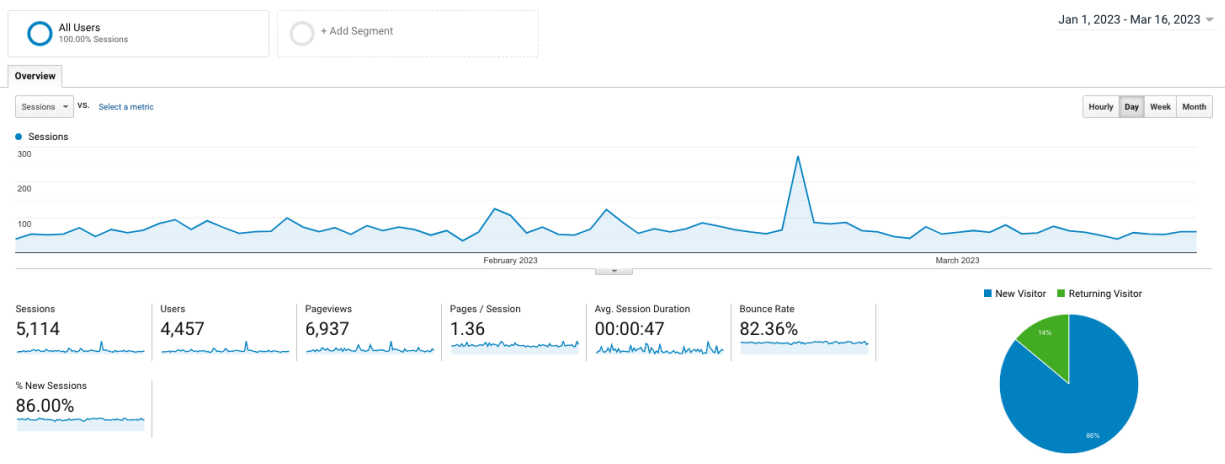


To: Communications Commission
From: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
Date: March 17, 2023
Re: Meridian Township & HOMTV Website Analytics

The Meridian Township website saw 298,000 pageviews from January 1, 2023 to March 16, 2023. Of those visitors, 83% were new and 17% were returning.



The HOMTV website saw 6,900 pageviews from January 1, 2023 to March 16, 2023. Of those visitors, 86% were new and 14% were returning.





To: Communications Commission
From: Andrea Smiley, Marketing & Public Relations Specialist
Date: March 10, 2023
Re: Marketing Updates & Social Media Performance Summary YTD

Updates

I recently launched a new digital newsletter for the Parks and Recreation department called “The Playbook”. This digital newsletter will be sent out to subscribers monthly. The Meridian Happenings digital newsletter will be sent out every other week, as a result.

I worked with Harris Nature Center staff on building their annual Summer Camp Guide, which is also a digital Flipbook that is embedded on the website and shared on social media. I also created a digital Flipbook for the Meridian Conservation Corps’ Native Plant Guide, which is also represented on the website and shared through social media.

I will also be redesigning the Parks and Recreation Family Fun Guide which will be mailed out to all residents the 2nd week of April.

Development of new internal building signs continues; sample designs were sent to the sign company and a meeting is scheduled to discuss specifications.

Paid Ads on Social

We are gearing up for our annual Celebrate Meridian event and planning out campaigns to promote the event. We ran a paid advertising social campaign calling for business vendors, food vendors and sponsors.

Facebook

Meridian Township: Total Facebook followers YTD is 8,643, which is an increase of 291 new followers. Total Facebook page reach from January 1 – March 10 was 71,188, which is a decrease of 27.4%. However, page visits equaled 16,446, which was an increase of 47%.

HOMTV: Total Facebook followers YTD is 2,434, which is an increase of 8. Total Facebook page reach from January 1 – March 10 was 4,003, which is a decrease of 44.8%. Page visits were 773, which was a decrease of 29.5%.

Meridian Township Parks & Recreation: Total Facebook followers YTD is 3,060,297, an increase of 82 new followers. Total Facebook page reach from January 1 – March 10 was 14,846, which is a decrease of 20.4%. However, page visits were 1,640, which was an increase of 34.8%.

Memo to Communications Commission

March 10, 2023

Re: Marketing Updates & Social Media Performance Summary YTD

Harris Nature Center: Total Facebook followers YTD is 4,095, which is an increase of 319. Total Facebook page reach from January 1 – March 10 was 22,507, which is an increase of 39.2%. Page visits were 1,172 which was an increase of 238.7%.

Meridian Township Farmers' Market: Total Facebook likes YTD is 12,141, which is an increase of 1,068. Total Facebook page reach from January 1 – March 10 was 292,887, which was a decrease of 44.1%. However, page visits were 7,623, which was an increase of 185.7%.

Meridian Township Fire Department: Total Facebook likes YTD is 2,558, which is an increase of 47. Total Facebook page reach from January 1 – March 10 was 8,482, which is a decrease of 18%. Page visits were 817, which was a decrease of 26.8%.

Instagram

Meridian Township: Total Instagram followers for Meridian Township YTD equals 2,171, which is an increase of approximately 4.4% over 2022 YTD. Profile visits equaled 1,572, which was an increase of 98.2%. Posts reached 6,831 accounts, which was an increase of 77.2% compared to YTD 2022. Post interactions equaled 2,746, which was an increase of 77.2% compared to 2022 YTD. Content interactions equaled 2,893, which was an increase of 67.1% and accounts engaged equaled 951, which includes an increase of 504% more accounts that weren't following when compared to the 2022 YTD.

HOMTV: Total Instagram followers for HOMTV YTD equals 503, an increase of 12. Posts reached 1,643 accounts, which is a decrease of 7.7% when compared to 2022 YTD. Content interactions equaled 179, a decrease of 21.5% when compared to 2022 YTD. Accounts engaged equaled 67, a decrease of 8.3%.

Parks and Recreation: Total Instagram followers YTD equals 113, an increase of 37 since year end 2022. Posts reached 867 accounts with 113 profile visits. Content interactions equaled 218, which is a 17.8% increase when compared to 2022 YTD.

Harris Nature Center: Total Instagram followers YTD equals 891, an increase of 58. Posts reached 584 accounts, a decrease of 89.6%. Post interactions equaled 221, a decrease of 19.4%. Content interactions equaled 228, a decrease of 49% when compared to end of year 2022. Accounts engaged equaled 101, which was a decrease of 48.8%.

Meridian Township Farmers' Market: Total Instagram followers YTD equals 1,222, an increase of 1.5%. Posts reached 1,168 accounts, an increase of 25.7%. Post interactions equaled 580, an increase of 38.4% when compared to end of year 2022. Accounts engaged equaled 193, an increase of 64.9%.

Twitter

Meridian Township: The communications staff is in a wait and see mode about the Twitter platform due to new ownership and recent announcements pertaining to the platform. It may not be the most trustworthy platform for government moving forward;



Memo to Communications Commission

March 10, 2023

Re: Marketing Updates & Social Media Performance Summary YTD

however, this is where local news stations go to find stories. **The local news stations tend to cover a lot of Meridian Township's news & information from social media posts.**

Total followers YTD are at 3,374, which is an increase since 2022 YTD. Twitter impressions from January 1 – March 10 equaled 265,543 with 4,235 profile visits. The top tweet, which earned 228,000 impressions during the period, was about the False Report of an Active Shooter at Okemos High School. The top mention, earning 115 engagements, was a tweet from @SuperOkemos, John Hood thanking Meridian Township First Responders. The top media tweet, which earned 6,584 impressions, was about a message to the community about area schools being closed due to the on-going investigation and crisis at MSU.

HOMTV: Total followers YTD are at 1,737, a decrease of 10. Twitter impressions from January 1 – March 10 equaled 4,034 with 209 profile visits. The top tweet, which earned 366 impressions during the period, was about the new episode of HOM Entertainment with Allison Sheppard starring in Jagged Little Pill at the Wharton Center. The top mention, earning 12 engagements, was a tweet from @meridiantwp talking about the Township Board calling for legislative action on gun violence. The top media tweet, which earned 290 impressions, was about The Jagged Little Pill at the Wharton Center.

LinkedIn

Meridian Township: Total LinkedIn followers are up to 737, which is 30 additional followers since YTD 2022 and an increase of 75%. The account also had 99 unique visitors, which is an increase of 19.3%.

HOMTV: HOMTV LinkedIn has 1,229 followers. Total impressions equaled 1,317, with 16 unique visitors and 6 new followers.

NextDoor – Nextdoor continues to be the best method of communicating various information to the community. The Nextdoor platform now has an emergency alert option that can be used for quickly reaching residents with emergency communications.

Total members equal 12,674 which is an increase of 289 new members since year-end 2022.

Constant Contact – The Communications Team will now send out the Meridian Happenings digital newsletter bi-weekly. The department will continue to assist with the monthly Green Gazette digital newsletter, as well as the new Parks and Recreation newsletter, the Playbook.

Currently, we have 9,562 contacts with an average open rate of 48% which is an increase of 10% over the industry average and click rate of 6%, which is an increase of 4% over the industry average. This percent remains high because the newsletter is shared on our social platforms and sent to contacts that have stated they want to receive information about the Township. The newsletter is our second best means of communicating information to residents.





Communications
Commission

Publications/ Promotions



11.D

To: Communications Commission
From: Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager
Date: March 17, 2023
Re: Family Fun Guide

In mid-April, the Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Department will be releasing their 24-page 2023 Family Fun Guide. An initial draft of the publication was created by Parks Staff and shared with the Communications team. Marketing and Public Relations Specialist Andrea Smiley is designing the magazine and will have the final draft completed by Monday, March 27.

Parks and Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner will proof the magazine and final edits will be made before the publication is sent to the printer. 27,000 copies will be printed and mailed to every Township resident.

Due to the release of the Family Fun Guide and budgeting that allows for one publication per year, there will be no Prime Meridian Magazine in 2023.



Communications
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Finance



Communications
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HOMTV Internship/Alumni