

Clinton County Democratic Party Newsletter



December 2024



CCDP's Twelve Wins - 2024 Edition

By Kathie Elliott. As we move into our holiday and year end celebrations, I simply want to express our deepest gratitude for the year we've created together and offer a little play on the

Twelve Days of Christmas. Here's what we've accomplished:

12 Monthly Meetings, featuring wonderful speakers, reports and camaraderie;
11 Social/Community Events, held for members, allies, and the community;
10 Decades of Life, Love, and Service, celebrating President Jimmy Carter;
9 Environmental Protection Events, preserving our parks, and roadways;
8 "Barn Style" Harris/Walz Signs, demonstrating our growing presence;
7 (Times 10), Equaling 70 Volunteers, canvassing over 4,000 doors;
6 Commission Candidates, boldly running races & maintaining 2 seats;
5 (that would be 5,000+) Postcards, filled, stamped and mailed;
4 Coffees and Conversations Meet-ups, bringing fellow Democrats together;
3 Major Fundraisers, like our Spring Banquet, Fall Festival, and yard signs;
2 (2x!) Membership, doubling this year; and...
1 One CCDP Office, our first office in over 10 years, now with an extended lease through July 2025!

There are no words to describe how grateful we are to have such support and commitment to keep moving Clinton County forward. You have been an inspiration and we look forward to stepping into 2025 recharged and ready to continue to work together for our democracy! We will not go back!



Voices Needed to Support Renewable Energy in Clinton County!

By Melany Mack. The issue of modifying the county renewable energy ordinance as it relates to solar will be on the agenda for the Board of Commissioners meeting this Friday, December 20. We need to make our voices heard! **Email me** and I can give you more information on signing an **online petition**, emailing county commissioners, and attending the meeting in person. Please consider adding your voice yet this week!

The county adopted a renewable energy ordinance earlier this year, but some of its provisions are overly restrictive. A few modifications to the ordinance will make it workable and enable projects that are in the planning stages to move forward. This would retain local control and create eligibility for Renewables Ready Communities Awards from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. These flexible incentives provide \$5,000 per megawatt for eligible utility-scale renewable energy projects and are available only to communities which undergo local permitting processes.

The changes needed to make Clinton County's ordinance workable are not unreasonable. They simply will make the ordinance compatible with state law and assure that utility-scale renewable energy developers can work directly with local governments on renewable energy projects. Thank you for doing your part!



Republicans Flip House; Trifecta Is Gone

By Tim Hughes. The 2024 elections brought a big change to the power dynamics in state government. House Republicans took the majority away from the Democrats, flipping a 56-54 Democratic majority to a 58-52 Republican margin of control. Democrats still hold the Governor's office and have a majority in the Senate, but by a slimmer margin. Kristen McDonald Rivet leaves the Senate to take her newly elected office in Congress, leaving a 19-18 majority, with 19 votes now needed to pass legislation. A special election will be scheduled to fill her spot.

House Republicans selected Minority Leader Matt Hall (R-Richland Twp.) to be the next House Speaker, while Democrats selected Rep. Ranjeev Puri (D-

Canton) as minority leader. Republicans gained the majority by defeating four Democratic incumbents, including Reps. Nate Shannon (D-Sterling Heights) in the 58th District and Jaime Churches (D-Wyandotte) in the 27th. Both lost to their Republican challengers in areas where Donald Trump performed well. Dems also lost the 109th District in the in the Upper Peninsula held by Rep. Jenn Hill (D-Marquette), a district that has not been represented by a Republican in more than 70 years. Rep. Jim Haadsma (D-Battle Creek) narrowly lost his Calhoun County 44th District.

With the loss of the House, the Democratic “Trifecta” of control over the House, Senate and the Governor’s office will come to an end. While it was in effect, the “Trifecta” overturned anti-labor laws enacted by former Republican Governor Snyder, repealing right to work and restoring prevailing wage laws. They also enacted legislation providing for common sense gun laws, expanding the state’s Civil Rights Act to include LGBTQ citizens and codifying abortion rights. Republican members will now hold all House leadership positions, appoint majorities to all House committees and dictate committee and floor agendas. They will have to contend with the Senate Democratic majority and Governor Whitmer, but will be able to negotiate issues from a stronger position.

Speaker Hall announced a top priority of spending \$2.47 billion more on road repair, without explaining where the money would come from. He claimed that school aid funding would be held harmless under his plan, but the numbers don’t add up. State Sen. Jeff Irwin (D-Ann Arbor) said “If he doesn’t address the massive hole for K-12, then it’s really more of a press release than a proposal.” The new 103rd Legislature will be sworn in on January 8. Senate members and their committees will continue in the new legislative session but all new legislation will have to be introduced before voting can begin.



Resolve to Get Involved!

By Ann McCulloch. With the New Year and political uncertainty looming large, you may be wondering how to make a difference post-election. We have some suggestions!

Channel your election energy by deepening your involvement with CCDP.

Our committees need volunteers! As with any small but mighty organization, we rely on the ideas, creativity, and hard work of our members. Getting involved in 2025 will make us stronger in 2026. What talents do you have that you can share? Contact **Kathie Elliott** for a conversation!

Pick a local government meeting to attend regularly. School boards need input from parents, caretakers, and community members. Get to know your local city or township officials and learn what is on their agendas for the coming year. You could also Find a **county-level committee** that interests you and apply to serve as a volunteer.

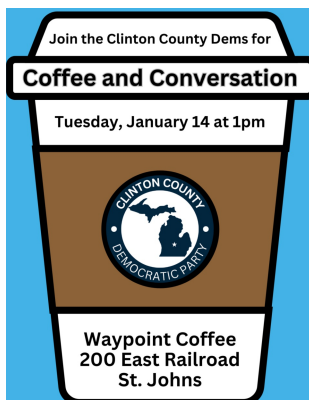
Commit to responding to policy proposals at all levels that are important to you. CCDP hopes to provide information and opportunity to help make your voice be heard in the coming year. Never give up hope that a committed group of individuals can make a difference!



CCDP 2024 Annual Report Update

By Matt Boak. As mentioned at our December monthly meeting, we are excited for the upcoming unveiling of CCDP's 2024 Annual Report! This year was full of exciting opportunities for CCDP, and we took advantage of every single one of them. All of our work, progress, and successes are documented in

our annual report, as well as information regarding how we grew our membership, our online reach, and our fundraising successes. The 2024 Annual Report will soon be sent out to CCDP members for a first look as a thank you to their dedication to our organization. If you want to make sure you are a CCDP member so you can receive the report, **activate your membership today.**

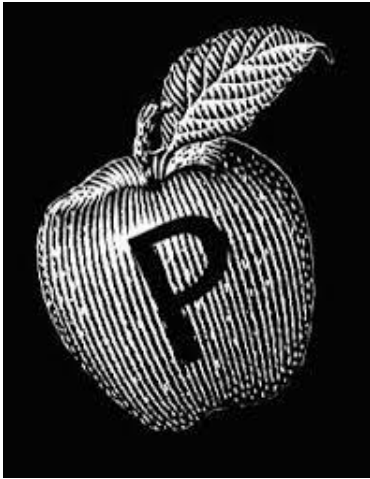


Coffee & Conversation Resumes January 14!

We look forward to seeing you in the new year as CCDP's Coffee & Conversation makes its return post-holidays. Join us on January 14 at 1:00 p.m. at Waypoint Coffee, 200 East Railroad Street, St. Johns. We are eager to hear what is on your mind and how you feel we can be most effective as a county party. Bring your ideas and your enthusiasm!

Local Spotlight - Phillips Orchard

By Lois Husby. Recently, I had the pleasure of



talking with Brian Phillips of **Phillips Orchard and Cider Mill**. If you attended CCDP's Fall Festival at Phillips Orchard, you know what a beautiful setting it is, spanning 170 acres with 30 acres of apple trees and smaller orchards of pear and peach trees. The Market sits on Gratiot County Line Road, on the west side of US-27. Upon entering, there's a small bar and the whole Market is packed with knitted or crocheted items, photos, wines, jewelry, tee shirts, ceramic items, and the star product, produce. One room houses bags of numerous varieties of apples. In season,

bags of pears and peaches are also available. And then there's the bakery! Cookies, breads, and pies fill the counter and freezers. The staff is always friendly and very helpful, often going out of their way to ensure customers find what they want.

Brian and his husband Gregg Smyth also own **Phillips Cider Bar** in Frandor where the focus is on cider pressed at the Orchard as well as a variety of adult beverages, with many wines made in Michigan. To enhance the beverages, they also serve homemade pizza. For shoppers, the Cider Bar also has a small market section. Brian and Gregg's newest business, Phillips Cider Bar and Pizzeria, is expected to open in Maple Rapids, hopefully by the end of the year with 2 full-time and 2-4 part-time employees. Their bakers will make a Neopolitan style pizza with a thin crust, baked hot and fast.

The Phillips family has a long history in the Maple Rapids area. Brian told me how his grandmother in Maple Rapids rode her horse to another relative's house and from there caught the school bus. Community involvement and a sense of connection are also important to Brian. The orchard donates apples to numerous services, including the Greater Lansing Food Bank and the Allen Neighborhood Center. Brian explained that he likes to see his money "going in a good direction." His connection to the orchard is very important to him and he tries to make that show in his products. Visit the businesses he and Gregg own and see for yourself. I think they succeed.

Help Local Lansing Business Impacted by Hate

By Shelby Neathammer. As we highlight businesses for the holiday season, one to consider supporting in Lansing is Strange Matter Coffee, a queer woman-



owned business at 2010 E. Michigan Ave. Strange Matter's mission has been to serve quality coffee and delicious baked goods, often with beautiful designs, while providing a safe space for community members to gather. Strange Matter has also been an active supporter of social justice causes by fundraising for organizations such as Uniting Three Fires Against Violence, a tribal domestic violence and sexual

assault coalition.

Unfortunately, starting in 2022, Strange Matter was targeted by a group of armed individuals calling themselves First Amendment Auditors. After the 2024 election, they started their anti-LGBTQIA2S attacks again. The goal of these individuals has been to film customers and employees while yelling slurs at them to get a reaction to then be posted online for monetary gain. These "auditors" are well-versed in free speech laws, and Lansing police have been unable to make arrests because they remain on public sidewalks. Strange Matter is spending money on window coverings, legal action, and other security measures to keep employees and customers safe and business sustained. In addition to making purchases at Strange Matter, please consider donating to their **safety fund**.

Supporting businesses like Strange Matter reminds us that we have daily political power, starting with how we spend our money. At a time when the propaganda machines would tempt people into turning on each other over identity politics, and as Democrats sit with the election results, what is happening to this business is a stark reminder of why listening to marginalized voices is important as they are akin to the yellow canaries used in mines trying to warn us all about the spectrum of violence that can occur from hate. Just because it isn't visible to all of us doesn't mean it's not there.



Upcoming Events

January 9 - CCDP Monthly Meeting and New Year Celebration: Save the date! We are excited to meet to kick off the new year at Jimmy's Pub, 16830 Chandler Road, East Lansing. Look for more details

and RSVP information to be posted soon!

January 12, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. - Indivisible Michigan 7 Monthly Meeting: East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing. **RSVP on Mobilize.**

January 14, 1:00 p.m. - CCDP Coffee and Conversation: We'll gather at Waypoint Coffee, 200 East Railroad Street in St. Johns. Hope to see you there!



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