

City of Watervliet

History

Early businessmen influential in forming the City of Coloma also played a critical role in the history of the City of Watervliet.

In the early 1830's, three businessmen from St. Joseph discovered the potential of the Paw Paw River in Watervliet Township. Partners Griffith, Hoyt, and Hatch purchased property along the river just south of Shingle Diggings, with plans to build a sawmill. The town called Griffith was platted, and plans progressed nicely until the men realized that property rights on the other side of the river were needed to construct the mill. Mr. Hoyt had made an enemy of the property owner, a Mr. Sumner whom he had sued in an attempt to collect on a bill owed to his mercantile in St. Joseph. Mr. Sumner, learning of the plans to build a town and lumber mill, bought the property that the partners needed and gained his revenge. The town of Griffith and the lumber mill never became a reality.

Mr. Sumner's success at thwarting the plans of Griffith, Hoyt, and Hatch made him hunger for a sawmill of his own. In 1833 Sumner, along with his new partner, Mr. Wheeler, moved east along the Paw Paw River and built a sawmill in Watervliet. Upon completion of the Sumner-Wheeler Mill, two brothers were hired to run it and moved into the area. These two men, who lived in a shanty built of slabs, were the first settlers in the village that would someday become the City of Watervliet.

The emerging village was called Waterford, after the flowing waters of the Paw Paw River. Through the year 1848, residents of Waterford and the surrounding area contracted with Isaac Swain to travel to the Bainbridge post office to get their mail. In 1849 a post office was established in the village, with Mr. Swain appointed as Postmaster. At this time it became necessary to change the name of the village, since another city called Waterford was within the state. The name "Watervliet" was chosen, which is a Dutch term meaning "flowing water".

Observations

Watervliet is a small, rural, friendly town with a good public works system, its own police force, and a joint fire department. Watervliet City is a close community that provides a good way of life for families. The downtown area has few empty buildings and has a concentration of antique stores that attracts tourists. Watervliet City is only one mile from Paw Paw Lake, a major tourist attraction.



All Demographic Information is based upon the 2009 Census Estimate

Population

1980 Census	1,867	
1990 Census	1,867	0.00 %
2000 Census	1,843	1.29 % decrease
2009 Census Estimate	1,743	5.43 % decrease

Personal Income

Median Family	\$43,594.00
Average per Capita	\$18,140.00
Median Household	\$33,882.00

Labor Force

Total Work Force	911
Unemployment Rate	9.1 %

Principal Economic Base Employers

Lakeland Community Hospital.....	292 Employees
Watervliet Public Schools.....	157 Employees

Housing

Number of Dwellings	846
Owner Occupied	519
Renter Occupied	232
Median Rent	\$572
Median Home Value	\$94,400

Building Permits – 2010

	Number Issued	Dollar Amount
Commercial	7	\$119,000.00
Other	36	\$605,000.00
Total	43	\$724,000.00

Taxes

In March 1994, Michigan voters approved a new tax structure (Proposal A). The following table provides a simplistic look at the taxes currently levied within this community. Property tax is based now upon taxable value, not state equalized value.

General Taxes

General County	4.7723
Law Enforcement/ Public Safety	0.3500
Special Voted 911	0.2500
Senior Citizens	0.3000
LMC College	1.7854
City	16.9389
Special Voted	5.7500
Subtotal	30.1466

School Taxes (Berrien RESA)

State Education Tax	6.0000
Non-Homestead (Business)	18.0000
Extra Voted Building & Site	0.0000
Debt Retirement	1.8600
Berrien RESA	0.1745
Special Education	2.1954
Subtotals	

Homestead	10.2299
Non-Homestead (Business)	28.2299

Watervliet

Government

Municipal Hall

Watervliet City Hall
158 West Pleasant Street
P.O. Box 86
Watervliet, MI 49098

Phone: (269) 463-6769
Fax: (269) 463-7708
www.watervliet.org

Council Meetings

Second Tuesday of Each Month
Start: 7:00 p.m.

County Commissioner

Jon Hinkelman, District 2
2201 M-140
Watervliet, MI 49098
Phone: (269) 463-3385
jdinkelman@qtm.net

State Governor

Rick Snyder (R)
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909
Phone: (517) 373-3400
Faz: (517) 335-6863
Rick.Snyder@michigan.gov

State Senator

John Proos (R), District 21
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536
Phone: (517) 373-6960
Fax: (517) 373-0897
SenJProos@senate.michigan.gov

State Representative

Al Pscholka (R), District 79
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514
Phone: (517) 373-1403
Fax: (517) 373-3652
AlPscholka@house.mi.gov

U.S. Representative

Fred Upton, 6th Congressional District
2183 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3761
Fax: (202) 225-4986
tellupton@mail.house.gov

U.S. Senators

Debbie Stabenow (D)
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-4822
stabenow.senate.gov/email.htm

Carl Levin (D)
269 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-6221
levin.senate.gov/contact/index.cfm Access
via website Contact Center

Education

The City of Watervliet is served
by the following school district:

Watervliet Public Schools
Kevin Schooley, Superintendent
450 E. Red Arrow Highway
Watervliet, MI 49098
Phone: (269) 463-5566
Student membership: 1,309



Economic Development

Berrien County Community Development
701 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085
Contact: Daniel Fette, Director
Phone: (269) 983-7111, Ext. 8617



South Elementary School



Historical Photo of
Shingle Diggins

Public Services

Police

Chief of Police: Don Divis
Phone: (269) 463-4770
Full Time Officers: 1
Part Time Officers: 11
Reserve Officers: 5
Number of Cars: 3

Fire

Director of Fire Services: Dan Jones
Phone: (269) 463-4233
Number of Stations: 1
Professional Firemen: 2
Part-Time Paid: 30
Volunteers: 0
Insurance Rate Class: 6

Trash Collection

Reliable Disposal
Phone: (800) 677-1083
Type: Independent
Pick Up Day: Tuesday

Best Way Disposal, Inc.
Phone: (269) 463-3232
Type: Independent
Pick Up Day: Monday

Recycling

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

Water

Public Works Department
Phone: (269) 463-6769
Source: Municipal Wells
Capacity: 325,000 GPD

Sewer

Watervliet City Hall
Phone: (269) 468-6769
System Type: Biological Trickling Filter
Capacity: 3,000,000 GPD
(Excess Capacity: 1,700,000 GPD)

Telephone

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

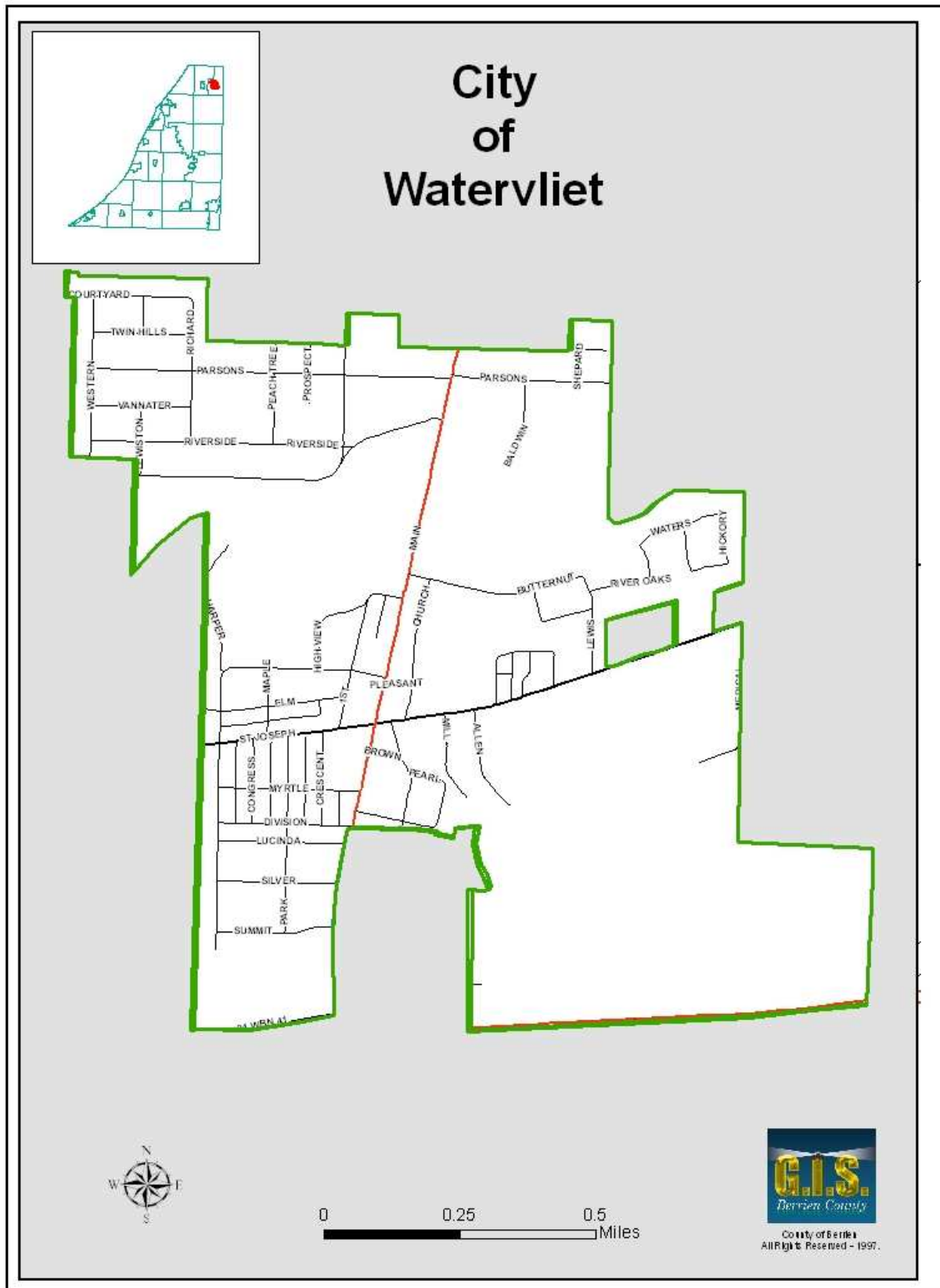
Gas

Michigan Gas Utilities
(800) 778-3802

Electric

American Electric Power Company
(800) 311-6424





This Community Snapshot has been prepared by the Berrien County Community Development Department. For more detailed information on services available in Berrien County, please visit our website at www.berriencounty.org/CommunityDevelopment.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information. However, as data is constantly changing, Berrien County will be held harmless for any omissions or errors contained herein.