



Ludington Celebrates 150th Anniversary in 2023

Sesquicentennial Events Planned Throughout the Year Include Love Ludington Weekend, Historic Tours, Music Concerts and Sesquicentennial Ball

LUDINGTON, Mich. – *March 9, 2023* – The city of Ludington will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2023 with a series of activities and events throughout the year to honor its rich past and bright future – from historic tours, to music concerts, to a birthday street party with fireworks. A new website also goes live – ludington150.com – listing sesquicentennial events, activities and historical information about the city.

“This will be an exciting year of celebration as we commemorate Ludington’s sesquicentennial,” said Ludington Mayor Mark Barnett. “We have a full schedule of events designed for everyone to enjoy, whether you love Ludington as a resident or a visitor. We encourage you to learn more about our history and how it has created who we are today as a city.”

March 22 marks the official anniversary that Ludington was incorporated 150 years ago in 1873, which will be marked by a kickoff sesquicentennial event 6 to 7 p.m. at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 501 E. Danaher St. Free and open to the public, the event will include performances by the Ludington High School Choir, recognition of past officials, historical presentation by Mason County Historical Society President James Jensen, proclamations, speeches and refreshments.

Ludington’s primary sesquicentennial celebration will be the [Love Ludington Weekend](#) June 9-11, kicking off Friday evening with a downtown street party that also will feature live music, kids’ games, food vendors and fireworks. Other events throughout the weekend include the Ludington Lakestride Races, historic home and B&B walking tours, discount days at JCI Ludington Mini Golf, and anniversary celebrations for two other Ludington icons – House of Flavors at 75 years and the S.S. Badger at 70 years.

“Ludington was built from the woods and continues to thrive today on the water,” said Rebecca Berringer, executive director of the Mason County Historical Society whose organization is planning a number of anniversary events. “Our lumber barons are the ‘angels of Ludington’ – what they created and left behind allows us to be who we are today, which you will see at many of our events.”

Other sesquicentennial events scheduled to date (also listed at ludington150.com/calendar) include:

- **Ludington’s Lumbering Heritage** – April 20, 6:30 p.m. at the Mason County Research Center – Presented by Ludington historian and author Mike Nagle, this event also showcases two new Mason County Historical Society services – the Mason County Genealogy Program and Mason County Historical Homes Program – in addition to featuring behind-the-scenes tours of the research center. Fee. masoncountymihistory.org/events

- **Sesquicentennial Concert featuring the Scottville Clown Band** – June 14, 7 p.m. at Waterfront Park – This free event is open to the public to enjoy one of Michigan’s most beloved bands (also dating to 1903), with the Scottville mayor presenting a proclamation to the City of Ludington.
- **Maritime Heritage Day** – Aug. 12 at Port of Ludington Maritime Museum – This event will feature a historical presentation, walking tours of the Maritime Heritage Trail and discounted ticket prices. More details to come. ludingtonmaritimemuseum.org/events-2
- **Cemetery Walk** – Aug. 26 at Lakeview and Pere Marquette Cemeteries – The Mason County Historical Society will lead walking tours where participants will come face-to-face with many of Ludington and Mason County’s most notable personages, brought to life by first-person interpreters. Fee. masoncountymihistory.org/events
- **“Trial of the Century: Mason County-Style”** – Sept. 23 at Historic White Pine Village – This mock trial at the original Mason County Courthouse will feature a judge and lawyers brought to life by first-person interpreters reenacting a case from Mason County history. Actors will engage with the crowd, some of whom may be selected as a juror. Other activities at the village will include a Town Hall Ice Cream Social, pie contest, and demonstrations throughout the buildings. Fee. historicwhitepinevillage.org/events
- **Sesquicentennial Ball** – Oct. 7 at Stearns Hotel – This fundraiser for the Mason County Historical Society will feature a sit-down dinner, music and dancing, plus a chance to learn more about the historic hotel as well as two notable figures in Ludington’s history, Eber Ward and Justus Stearns, in “The Quarrel Heard ‘Round the County” reenacted by locals Rick Plummer and Mike Nagle. \$150 per person, and attendees are encouraged to dress for any decade over the last 150 years. masoncountymihistory.org/events

Anniversary-related events and information can be found at Ludington150.com, with more added throughout the year. Future events may include activities like reading contests, art exhibitions, history tours, and sesquicentennial products like signature menu items. Additionally, the Community Foundation for Mason County, in partnership with Pennies From Heaven and the Love Ludington Fund, is awarding \$15,000 in grants to area nonprofits and businesses who are planning special events or activities to celebrate the sesquicentennial, which will be announced soon. Ludington area organizations also are encouraged to create their own anniversary-related events or products throughout the year as part of the sesquicentennial and can email information to Ludington150@gmail.com so details can be added to the anniversary website.

Ludington History

Located on the shores of Lake Michigan and surrounded by dense forest, Ludington became a city in 1873 due to its abundant natural resources. For centuries the home of Ottawa Indians, the area was later visited in the mid-1600s by French missionary Father Jacques Marquette. By the mid-1800s, settlers came to the area lured by the virgin pine forest and its prime location at the mouth of the Pere Marquette River where it empties into Lake Michigan. Lumber barons such as James Ludington were attracted to the region (initially named the village of Pere Marquette), with 14 mills operating on the banks of Pere Marquette Lake alone at the peak of the lumbering era.

Pere Marquette was renamed Ludington in 1873 in honor of James Ludington who platted the land and helped develop the area with his logging operations, utilizing the channel deepened by Charles Mears for commercial shipping on Lake Michigan. The city’s history continued to be shaped by its proximity to the water even after the last sawmill was closed, building and dedicating its "million dollar harbor" in 1914 that later served the salt, sand and chemical industries in addition to fostering commercial fishing, shipping, the U. S. Coast Guard and tourism that established Ludington as a major Great Lakes port.

About the Ludington Sesquicentennial

Ludington, Michigan, celebrates its 150th anniversary as a city in 2023, a year marked with special events, activities and products to commemorate the city's founding in 1873. For a complete list of sesquicentennial events and details, visit the Ludington sesquicentennial website at Ludington150.com and the [Ludington Sesquicentennial Facebook Page](#), and follow #Ludington150.

About the Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

The [Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau \(LACVB\)](#) is the official destination marketing organization for Mason County, promoting the region to business and leisure visitors to maximize economic impact. An independent nonprofit organization, the LACVB collaborates with its partners to champion the continuous improvement of the region as a unique and memorable tourism destination. For more information, visit pureludington.com, Facebook.com/PureLudington and twitter.com/@Pure_Ludington.

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