

around the state

townships in the spotlight



Chassell Township

The 51.9 square miles that make up **Chassell Township** (Houghton Co.) are home to more than 1,822 residents. Located in the beautiful Keweenaw Peninsula of upper Michigan, the township was organized in 1888, and named after John Chassell, a prominent businessman and farmer whose farmland became the site of the community of Chassell. The township's early history centered on logging and milling. The Sturgeon River served as a key early artery for floating white pine timber from the south and a narrow gauge railroad later brought hardwood timber to the mill from areas to the southwest. Commercial fishing and agriculture would become important economic drivers for the area during the 20th century, with potatoes and strawberries becoming key crops.

Today in downtown Chassell, community members can be seen watering bright flower beds along the sidewalks. Walking around the quaint township, visitors will notice the local post office built from Jacobsville Sandstone, the grotto owned by the St. Anne Catholic Church, and the community gazebo built by local students.

In July, the township hosts an annual Strawberry Festival in the township's Centennial Park. During the two-day festival, the township sells scrumptious strawberry shortcake

and community members can attend the fish boil in the pavilion. Local crafters are featured at a craft show during the festival. The Strawberry Festival features the Strawberry Queen competition and once the queen is crowned, the queen is in the festival parade.

The community's natural beauty and outstanding array of outdoor recreational assets support a four-season lifestyle unparalleled by other parts of the country. Key community assets are the beautiful wooded 10K classic cross country ski trail and 10K snowshoeing trail system. The trails cross through Centennial Park and reach all the way up to Houghton. In the winter, residents ride through the same trails, which double as state-maintained snowmobile trails. Centennial Park on Pike Bay has a playground, beach, boat launch, fish cleaning station, ice skating, ice fishing access and pavilion, and the Chassell Heritage Center museum is also a popular activity.

With funding support from the Portage Health Foundation and a recently passed recreation millage, the township will open a 10-station fitness trail this summer on a portion of the cross country ski trail. The recreation millage will also support the opening of an off-leash dog park along Pike Bay. The township has an engineering study underway to support the development of a motorboat, canoe and kayak launch at the US-41 Sturgeon River crossing funded 50 percent by a state Department of Natural Resources Waterways Grant in order to help develop this outstanding river trail. An historic interpretive trail is also under development on the mill site of the Sturgeon River Lumber Company and Worcester Lumber Company.

The township is committed to becoming a Michigan Economic Development Corporation Redevelopment Ready Community and is currently engaging in the development of its master plan. Chassell Township seeks to leverage its outstanding location and four-season outdoor recreation assets to become a home for the remote workforce and is also focused on revitalizing its agricultural economy.

