

MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE  
**CONVENTION 2023**

**TRAVERSE CITY, MI**  
**OCT 18-20, 2023**  
**#MMLCONV**



# Telling Our Stories: Michigan Communities Should Learn to Brag

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# KATIE GUYER

**Communications Coordinator**

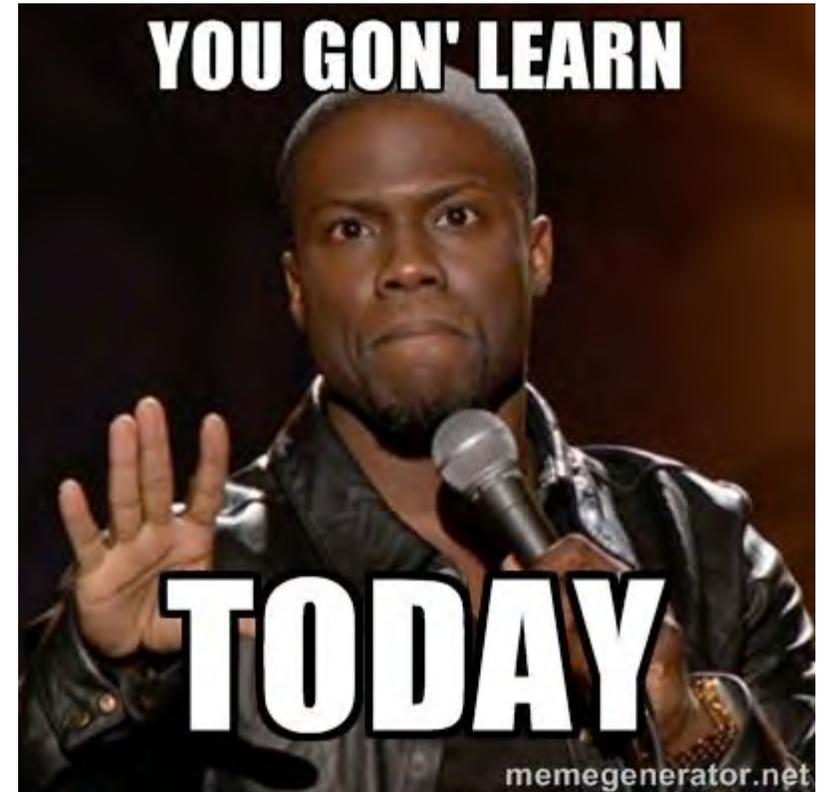
**City of Midland**

Since 2016, Katie has led the City of Midland's day-to-day communications initiatives with a focus on transparency, authenticity, and personality. In previous lives, she's served in various creative roles in economic development, logistics, ecommerce, and digital communications.

Katie has a bachelor's degree in marketing from Butler University and is a certified public manager through the National Certified Public Manager Consortium.

# What are we learning today, KG?

- What is “bragging”?
- Why we just won’t talk about ourselves
- Why we *should* do it
- How to do it
- What you’ll need to do it
- How the City of Midland does it



What is “bragging”, anyway?

**Merriam-Webster says a brag is:**

**A pompous or  
boastful statement**

**Arrogant talk or  
manner**

**To talk or assert  
boastfully  
(verb)**

Why do we avoid talking about ourselves?

**Society's told us that it's just not cool.**

***“Who knows himself a braggart, let him fear this, for it will come to pass that every braggart shall be found an ass.”***

**— Shakespeare**



Why do we avoid talking about ourselves?



**We're just so Midwest Nice.**



Why do we avoid talking about ourselves?



**We have imposter syndrome..  
And we're worried someone is  
going to notice.**

But what is bragging in the private sector?

# Marketing.

**THE LEADER IN 5G**  
LARGEST. FASTEST. MOST RELIABLE.  
ACCORDING TO UMLAUT

Fastest: According to Opensignal Awards based on average speeds (USA, 5G User Experience Report Apr 2021). Most Reliable: According to independent third party Umlaut from crowdsourced user experience data (Sept 2020 to Feb 2021). See 5G device coverage, & access details at T-Mobile.com.

**EVERY HAMBURGER. EVERY DAY.**

**FRESH, NEVER FROZEN BEEF.**

Fresh beef available in the contiguous U.S., Alaska and Canada

**DOES YOUR TRUCK OFFER THE MOST TORQUE OF ANY GAS HD PICKUP?**

**DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TRUCK?**  
Does your truck offer a Big Block Vortec™ V8\* with 450 lb. ft. of torque\*? Silverado® Heavy Duty does. Don't just stand there. Tow something.

Silverado. The right truck. From Chevy.

**SILVERADO LIKE A ROCK**

\*177- THE TRUCK or chevy.com/silverado. All claims are based on latest available competitive information and exclude other GM vehicles. \*Available on 2500HD and 3500 models only. ©2023 GM Corp. Buckle up, America! (Trailer available on LE and LT models only. Call 1-800-ORANGE-7 or visit center.com for agency information and details.

The little things. That's what we're perfect in.

Small things can be great. Whether you fly Swiss Business, you'll enjoy elevated lounge access, a modern entertainment system and a fully flat bed. For in-flight flight from 8 North American gateway to Switzerland, with short connections to 27 destinations worldwide, contact your travel agent, call 1-877-FLY SWISS (TTY users dial 711) or visit swiss.com

Our sign is a promise. **SWISS**

**EVERYTHING YOU WISH FOR.**

**GREAT TASTE. LESS FILLING.**

**HALF THE CARBS OF BUD LIGHT**

**Live Responsibly**

\* Miller Lite contains 32 grams carbohydrates per 12oz, while Bud Light contains 6.6 grams carbohydrates per 12oz.

What we're actually talking about today is

# Storytelling

(& maybe a little humblebragging).

We're creating what we all crave as humans:

# Connection.



**“The mutual love affair between people and their places is one of the most powerful influences in their lives, yet rarely thought of in terms of a relationship.”**

**– Peter Kageyama**

# Alternate Session Title: What Online Dating Taught Me about Marketing My Community

Katie Guyer, Communications Coordinator, City of Midland



What you'll need to create a successful relationship:

# Content.

# What you'll need to create awesome content:

- **Story subjects – attributes, amenities, etc.**
- **Photos**
- **Videos**
- **Stories (copy)**
- **A platform(s)**
- **An authentic brand voice**



**Day 1 creating content**



**Day 346 creating content**

Find awesome & easy ways to create content:

- **Pull in local “experts” - your residents!**
- **Use all the free tools at your disposal (Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, etc.)**
- **You don’t need a professional set-up**
- **Listen (yep, that’s it)**

So, uh... what am I supposed to brag about?

- Amenities you have
- Activities you offer
- Services you perform
- Anything and everything that makes you so darn lovable



Idea: Show off your best side(s)



# Idea: Share kudos on socials

- Staff shout outs “from the inbox”
- Kind letters, emails, social comments
- Tell the story of special in-person interactions



# Idea: Share kudos on socials

City of Midland, Michigan - Municipal Government  
Published by Katie Guyer · January 24

From our inbox:

"Dear City of Midland-  
Tuesdays are our favorite day!!  
Thank you to our favorite form of entertainment for beeping your horn for us!!

Love,  
The Bee-Hive from HoneyBee's Daycare  
🐝🐝🐝"

Thanks for sharing, little bees! You make Tuesday our favorite day, too! 🐝



## Post Insights

### Total Insights

See more details about your post.

Post Impressions

14,684

Post reach

13,720

Engagement

2,261

# Idea: Show them they're in good hands with you

- **Share staff accolades & achievements**
- **Makes current employees feel appreciated & potential employees curious**
- **Brag about your residents, too!**



# Idea: Brag about the people you love – your residents!



City of Midland, Michigan - Municipal Government

Published by Katie Guyer · February 13, 2020

We frequently hear wonderful things from residents about our staff going above and beyond to serve our community. We love to hear the praise you have for our team members' efforts, but tonight we want to brag a little about you, Midland.

On Wednesday evening, Water Distribution crews were called to the area of Lamplighter Lane and Wildwood Street to replace a broken water main valve. When that happens, water service is shut off, sometimes for hours at a time, which rarely makes anybody living in the area very happy. As the crews worked for hours in the 20-degree weather to replace the valve, they were greeted by numerous residents of the neighborhood coming out to offer hot coffee, snacks, and a place to keep warm. One couple even brought the crew McDonald's coffees with all the fixings! Their concern for our workers' safety and comfort, even while their own comfort was being inconvenienced, touched our crew's hearts.

As your City government, we want to thank you for caring about our people and showing them support and love. That little moment of kindness shown to our Water Distribution crews last night reminded us that we're blessed to be able to serve the community we love every day.

Thank you, Midland, for taking care of us just as much as we take care of you.



What you'll need to create a successful relationship:

# Substance.

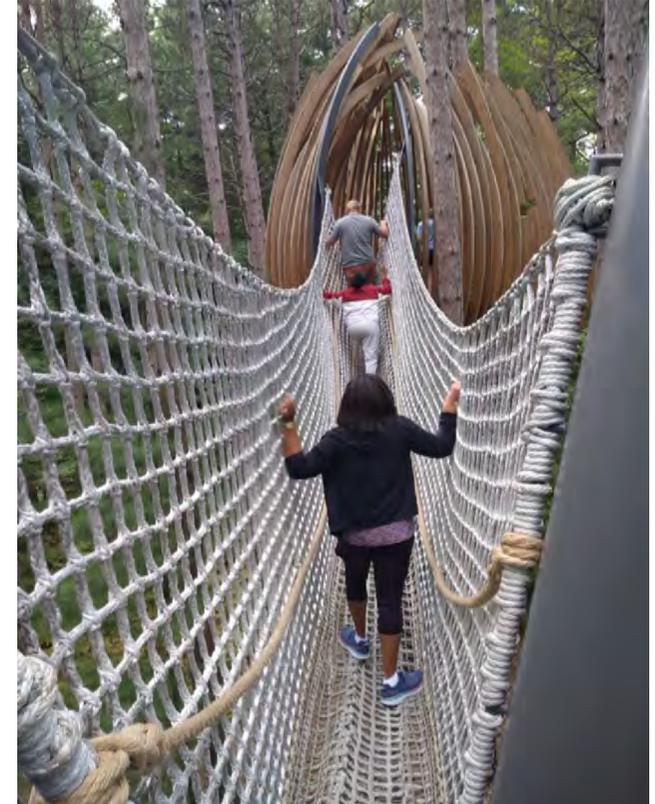
# Idea: Talk about what makes you unique



**World's oldest Santa Claus school**

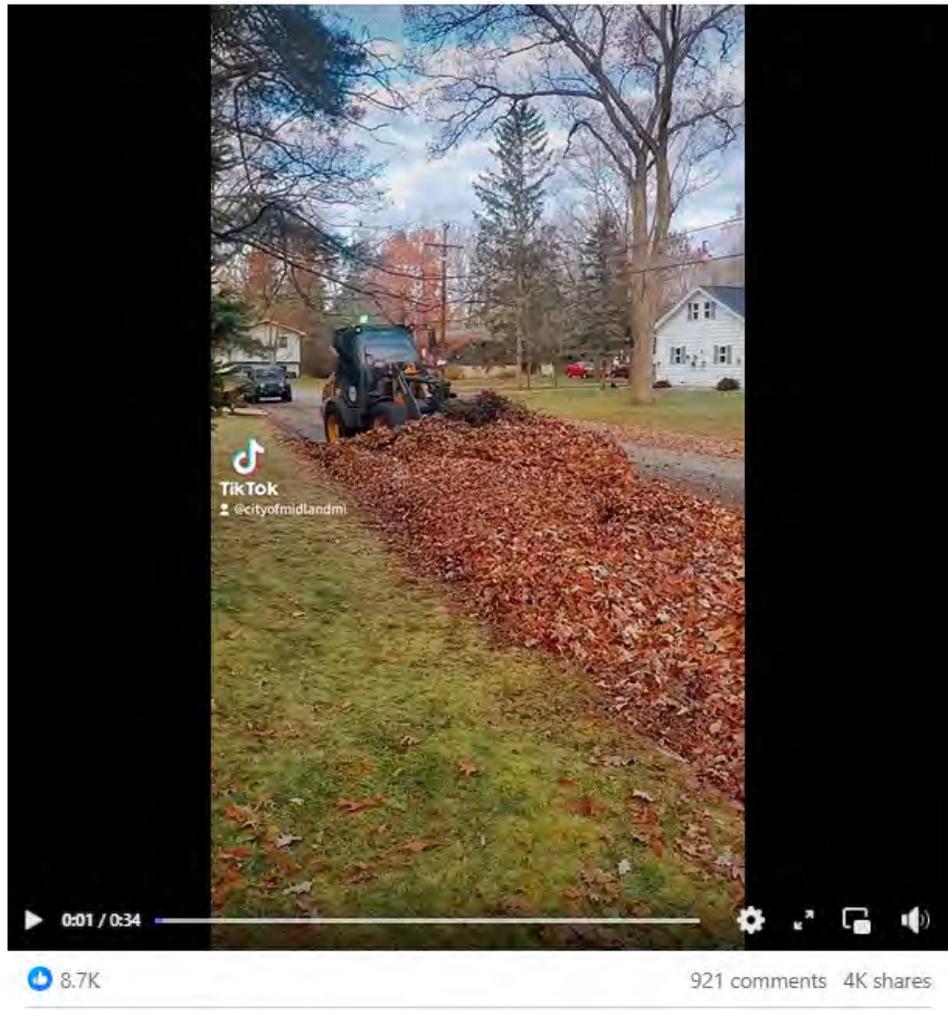


**More park land than 3 nearest cities combined**



**World's longest canopy walk**

# Idea: Talk about what makes you unique



## Post Actions

Total clicks	479K		
Clicks to play	178.5K		
Link clicks	285		
Other clicks	300.2K		
15-second video views	4M	3-Second Viewers	6.5M
People reached	5.8M		



Mindy Koos Kickland

I've lived in a couple other cities before moving to Midland 14 years ago & feel so incredibly lucky to live in a city with such awesome municipal services. The services offered to Midland residents compared to other cities continues to amaze me. (And the city social media director is icing on the cake!). Thank you to ALL City of Midland employees for making this town such a great place to call home. ❤️

1y Love Reply Hide Edited



Scott Jastrzab

Holy crap I lived in Buffalo and those idiots obviously didn't know how to pick up leaves props to the guys in Michigan

1y Like Reply Hide

Idea: Take every opportunity to tell a story



## Midland City Modern Master Plan

Read it now:  
[midlandcitymodern.com](https://midlandcitymodern.com)

# Idea: Take every opportunity to tell a story



## LOCAL ECONOMY

*A strong, diversified economy in Midland and the surrounding Great Lakes Bay Region is critical to our community's current and future successes. Luckily for us, Midland has several advantages – the global headquarters of a Fortune 100 company, a nationally recognized public school system, a regional hospital affiliated with the University of Michigan, and beautiful natural features – that make it a community of choice in the region, state, and beyond. In addition to these advantages, we are fortunate to be home to a generous philanthropic community and highly involved partner organizations that help make conceptual ideas –*

*even the seemingly impossible ones – into reality. These partners include several local foundations, non-profit organizations, and governmental agencies. Together, each organization's work aids in creating a community where our residents can prosper – and they all play a role in executing the goals contained in this Master Plan.*

*Midland City Modern is written with a desired economic future for the community in mind. This is no accident: A strong economic base ensures not only residents' individual prosperity, but also that community services remain readily available and*

*accessible to all who need them. In Midland, our residents recognize the importance of supporting current commercial and industrial economic growth, while also challenging us to grow the existing tax base and to mindfully preserve the area's natural features. Transportation and communication are no longer major hurdles in today's global marketplace; instead, companies now realize that the keys to success are held by a talented and educated workforce, creative innovation, and the ability to adapt at a rapid pace. As an aggressive and enthusiastic supporter of industrial and manufacturing growth, Midland is uniquely*

*positioned to attract and retain businesses like these to support the local economy.*

**Through thoughtful consideration of the current landscape and curious exploration of the future, Midland can continue to chart a unique course and develop an economic environment that provides abundant opportunities for residents and local businesses.**

Idea: Plan a date and make it special



## Midland Citizens Academy

- 10-week program to learn about local government
- Behind-the-scenes tours, 2-hour class sessions, and staff introductions
- Opportunity for storytelling, sharing, and connection with an invested audience!

Idea: Spread the love

**Max Loves Midland:**  
Our community-wide  
branding initiative

Check it out:  
[maxlovesmidland.com](https://maxlovesmidland.com)



What you'll need to create a successful relationship:

# Authenticity.

Idea: If you're gonna talk about it, be about it.

**Brand voice is the unique personality that your brand presents to the world.**

**Brand is what the world thinks of that personality.**

Idea: If you're gonna talk about it, be about it.

**Midland is “Sparkle City”**

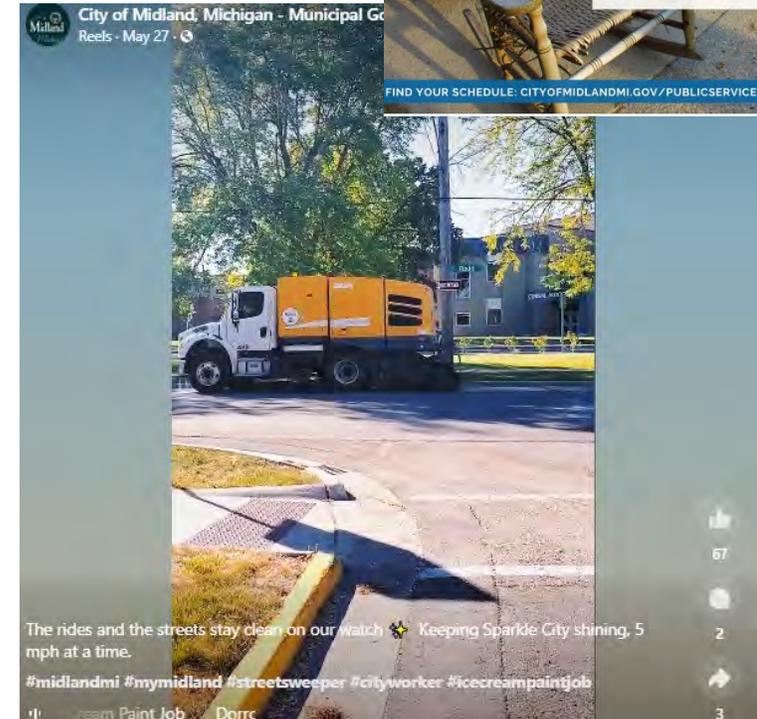
# Idea: If you're gonna talk about it, be about it

City of Midland, Michigan - Municipal Government  
Published by Katie Guyer · October 21, 2022

IT'S GAME DAY! The Sparkle City Super Bowl™ will divide households and workplaces while bringing the community together tonight as the Midland High Chemics take on the Dow High Chargers for their annual football game at Midland Stadium. So tell us... who ya got winning this game?

👉 = Dow High  
❤️ = Midland High

Don't forget: Our very own MCTV will be broadcasting this game LIVE beginning at 7 p.m.! Watch it on cable TV (Charter Spectrum 189 or U-verse 99 "Messages"); Roku, Apple TV, or Amazon Fire TV devices via the "MCTV Network" app; on mobile devices via the Cablecast Community Media app; or online at [www.cityofmidlandmi.gov/livestream](http://www.cityofmidlandmi.gov/livestream) under the "Messages" channel. GO SPORTS!



In conclusion...

**The way we feel about where we live influences the way we feel about ourselves.**

**Make your community's energy so positively infectious that someone can't help but want to be part of it.**

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