

Gaylord rode rails onto pages of history

BY MIKE VON STEENBURG
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The city of Gaylord is unquestionably a child of the iron horse.

Even its name comes from that association.

Augustine Smith Gaylord, an attorney for the railroad bestowed his name on the tiny village, previously known as Barnes in honor of a railroad secretary who lived in Lansing. It was rechristened "Gaylord" when the village was incorporated in 1881.

Between the time that the railroad reached the village from the south in the spring of 1874, and 1881, the population of the village had grown from about 50 people to more than 400. By that time, the railroad had extended to Mackinac City to the north and Gaylord had become a stop on the railroad. It was no longer simply the end of the line.

The first organization in the village was the Congregational Church, established in 1874. Initially, the new church was presided over by a number of mission ministers. But in 1876, the Rev. A. Van Auken became the first permanent minister. In 1879, Van Auken dedicated the building, part of which is still used, on the site where the present church now stands.

The office of the first county newspaper, started in 1875, was moved to Gaylord in 1878. Henry McKinley, who had joined the paper's staff the previous year, bought it six years later and continued to operate it as editor and publisher until 1906.

ON MARCH 18, 1881, the first village council meeting was held, Chester C. Mitchell presiding over that initial meeting. Gaylord was to remain a village for the next 41 years. Then in January, 1922, a greatly

divided citizenry voted 114 to 93 to have Gaylord become a city. John P. Hamilton, village president at the time, became the first mayor.

In 1881, the first water system was installed using wooden water mains. A few of these original mains continued to be used long after more modern systems were available. The last wooden main was removed in 1966.

Also in 1881, a society dedicated to promoting one of the areas most important industries — farming — was formed. The Agricultural Society immediately set about establishing a county fair, the first one being held on the Courthouse Square in autumn of 1881.

THE GAYLORD City Band was also formed that year and it became a familiar attraction at community events for many

years, even taking a first place award in a State Band Tournament in 1884.

Nathaniel L. Parmater, who was paid \$250 to serve as Otsego County's first Probate Judge, holds the distinction of being the first doctor to reside in Gaylord. Parmater settled in Livingston Township as a homesteader in 1873.

In 1888, Parmater moved to Gaylord so his children could be closer to their school and to cut down on the amount of traveling necessary to visit his patients. He also was the man responsible for bringing the wonder of rapid electronic communication to Gaylord by installing a telegraph in his home and connecting it to his office, the bank and several other residences. His daughter, Vivia, was the first child born in Otsego County. There is also a county road named in his honor.

Comprehensive plan focuses on 'people boom'

BY BRAD FLORY
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GAYLORD — As residents of the Otsego County seat prepare to celebrate Gaylord's centennial, planners have approved a document which examines existing problems within the county and addresses challenges for the future.

The Otsego County Comprehensive Plan, a 106-page document approved on Sept. 21 by the county planning commission, was developed to prepare officials for projected changes within the county through 1985.

Work on the study began two years ago when the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments was commissioned to undertake the project at a cost of \$6,000.

The comprehensive plan offers recommendations and guidelines for policy making to best deal with projected growth.

Growth in Otsego County is best reflected in what the study calls "one of the fastest growing (populations) in the state."

The plan projects the county population, currently at about 15,000, will grow to 17,900-18,700 by 1985.

By the turn of the century, the study estimates, there will be about 25,000 people living in Otsego County. And that estimate falls significantly under projections made in other studies.

Recommendations in the comprehensive plan are made not only to keep up with a rapidly growing population, but also in consideration of how specific policies may affect patterns and levels of growth, the plan says.

DEALING WITH an expanding population to ensure orderly growth in Otsego County is the major theme of the study.

Broad goals approved by the planners include: maintaining the character and environmental quality of the county through orderly growth; limiting losses of forestry and agricultural land; preserving the quality of lakes, rivers and wetlands; expanding local services to meet population growth; improving transportation links to other areas of the state and moving towards a more evenly balanced economy.

Listed below are some more specific recommendations of the plan to help meet those goals in various fields of concern:

• **ECONOMY** — New industry should be actively pursued within the county. Industry should be developed in such a way to "complement current reliance on tourism."
New industries should be located at or

near current industrial sites. Site selection and design should be closely regulated, with local citizens and officials having input into the decision-making process.

Oil and gas drilling should be closely supervised to ensure minimal impact on the environment, with sites "returned as nearly as possible to their original condition on completion of drilling."

• **HOUSING AND LAND USE** — Land used for residential construction should be limited.

Clustered development, condominiums and apartments should be encouraged. Subdividing of properties without building on a majority of lots should be discouraged, along with splitting of parcels suitable for agriculture and forestry.

Instituting a maximum residential lot size in prime forestry and agricultural areas is considered as a means to use "the county's land resources to their highest potential."

Greenbelts should be developed and forest management practices should be encouraged among private owners of forest lands.

Newly developing areas should be provided with local services, particularly sewer, before development is undertaken.

Finally, a Development Review Board should be established to oversee new construction, with Site Plan and Architectural Review Boards established and empowered to enforce development standards. The county zoning ordinance should be updated.

• **TRANSPORTATION** — The county's east-west highway connections should be improved for the movement of goods and convenience of travelers and residents.

Efforts should be made to encourage both passenger air and rail service in the county. Passenger services are seen as a benefit to residents and the tourism trade.

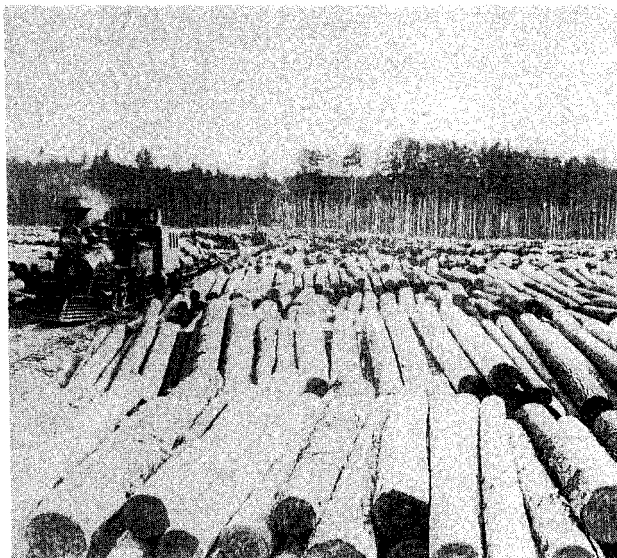
Development of a rail-truck freight facility in the Gaylord area should be encouraged as a boost to new and existing business.

• **LOCAL SERVICES** — Construction of facilities such as a community activity center, auditorium or convention center should be encouraged. The study recommends the possibility of converting the Alpine Center facility into a multi-purpose community center "should be investigated thoroughly."

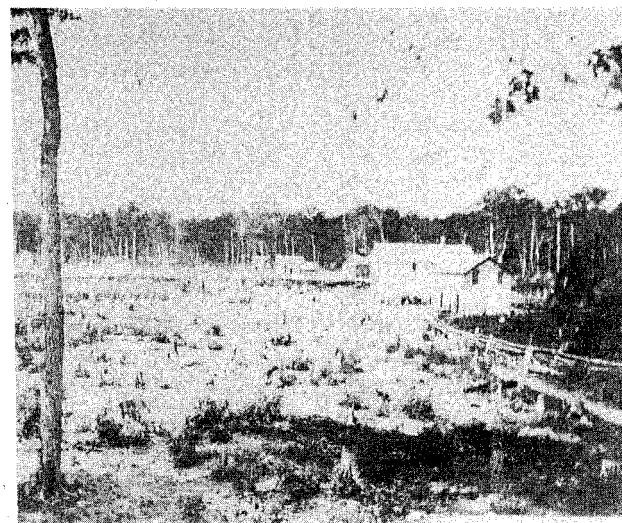
Expansion is considered for county library and jail facilities.

Establishment of a county museum, ex-

(Cont'd on P. 4)



THE TOWN KING PINE BUILT — Tourism and manufacturing may be what sustains Gaylord in 1981, but in the late 1800s, it was lumber that the community was weaned on. In this picture, taken in about 1900, thousands of boardfeet of logs await the logging train that would carry them to the lumber mills.



THE FIRST BUILDINGS appeared along main street in Barnes, Mich. in 1875. Five years later, Barnes, Mich., would become Gaylord, Mich. These two views of Main Street, looking west, at left as it appeared in 1878, and at right, as it appears today, shows what a transformation has taken place. The buildings in the picture at left were located about the present site of Family Federal Savings and Loan, shown at right.