

## Sumner Township Community Profile

Sumner Township is located on the western edge of Gratiot County in the central part of Michigan. Picturesque fields and forests cover the majority of the rural area that is home to almost 2,000 residents. Agriculture is the primary industry in the township, but there are also many other types of privately owned businesses in the area. The township contains two villages within its borders, Elm Hall and Sumner.

The first settlers in Sumner Township began arriving in the fall of 1854, when the hills were covered with pine forests that ranked among the best in the state. Logging played the major portion of activity in the early days of the township. A saw mill located in downtown Sumner produced lumber for many other parts of the county until 1948. Other pioneer businesses included a millinery, a wagon store, and even a harness shop. A local hotspot of the time was the Sumner Hotel, which offered guests a large ballroom, saloon, and family restaurant. Today, both Sumner and Elm Hall still have general stores that offer many amenities for local residents.

Sumner Township is fortunate to have a variety of parks and recreational opportunities available for the public. Hubsher Park, a large county park with a lake, beachfront, covered picnic area, and walking trails, is located on the southern edge of the township and is a popular place for reunions and family day trips. Centennial Park, near downtown Sumner, offers visitors a covered picnic area, playground, soccer field, and a sand volleyball court as well as frontage on the Pine River that is a haven for local fisherman. There is also a park in downtown Elm Hall that has been recently updated with new playground equipment. In addition to all the outdoor recreation opportunities, the village of Sumner also has a large Community Center with several rooms and a gymnasium available for rent for social or sporting events year round.

The Sumner Daze festival, held in downtown Sumner the third weekend of August each year, is a popular three-day family friendly celebration. This community event offers many different activities such as a parade, pancake breakfast, country and gospel music event, horse and pony pulls, a classic car show and much more. Sumner Daze started out as a one day event in 1986 and continues to draw in visitors from all over the area each year!

Other community events include the biannual "Clean Up Day" where on the third Saturday of each May and September residents can dispose of large trash items in dumpsters provided by the township. Recycling is also offered on the third Saturday of each month at the Recycle Barn located near the Sumner Community center for township residents.

Many changes have taken place in the area since those first settlers came through, but Sumner Township continues to be a wonderful place for community and fun!