

**ISABELLA COUNTY
Application for Special Use Permit**

Applicant:

Name Deb Gascho / SBS Contracting Owner/Agent/Other interest
Address 11080 Gower Parkway, Mt Pleasant, MI 48858
Phone 989-773-0770 Email dgascho@sbscontracting.com

Property Owner: (if different from applicant)

Name Julia Tyrone Steber
Address 1650 N. School Rd
Phone 989-289-0405

Property Location:

Township Sherman Section 36 Zoning District AG-3
Address 6410 W. Leiter Rd. Weidman, MI 48893
Tax I.D. Number 13-036-20-006-10

Description of Project and Proposed Use (Attach additional pages if necessary):

See Attached drawings

Deb Gascho / SBS Contracting 3/4/2026
Signature of Applicant Date

Optional: I hereby grant permission for members of the Isabella County Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator to enter the above-described property for the purposes of gathering information related to this application.

Deb Gascho / SBS Contracting 3/4/2026
Signature of Applicant Date

NOTE: All information received by this department is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Under this Act, persons are allowed to request copies of said information. This includes, but not limited to, all copyrighted drawings/blueprints.

Office Use Only

File No. PSUP 20001 Fee \$350.00 Check # 3040 Receipt No. 17228
Date Application Received 3-12-26 Application Received By [Signature]
Legal Description Attached? YES NO Site Plan Attached? YES NO
Applicable Ordinance Section(s) 12.05 HH



hearts, hooves, healing...HOPE!

Center for Hope and Healing at HopeWell Ranch.

Vision: The love of Christ in action to encourage and empower struggling people to achieve hope, healing, and purpose.

Mission: To create a loving environment of hope, healing, and purpose for children, individuals, and families, where lives can be transformed, in order to succeed, through the redeeming love of Christ.

HopeWell Ranch is a nonprofit organization EIN: 20-3667572

Who we serve: children, veterans, families, and individuals experiencing or who have experienced complex or acute trauma, developmental/cognitive delays, low self-esteem, grief and loss, addictions, post-traumatic stress, etc.

We have worked with Hospice, Saginaw Chippewa Tribe, local schools, College campuses, senior centers, churches, MMI, Michigan Works, SCSEP with AARP, Assisted Living, RESD's. Governmental agencies, Community Mental Health, Dept. of Health and Human Services, Hospitals, Doctor offices, and other local non-profits.

We are an affiliate agency with United Way of Greater Central Michigan. We have an endowment with Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation and have written many grants through MPACF.

How: HopeWell Ranch uses the Eagala (Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association) Model for helping people struggling with their challenges. This is an internationally utilized model where a licensed Mental Health Provider, and a certified Equine Specialist and the horses hold space for the healing of the people who come looking for hope and healing.

Site Plan Reference:

The Dumpster is from Grainger and it is located East of the pole barn and west of the Richard Schmidt (recreation cabin) cabin. It is located at the end of the driveway out of the way of cars. It is emptied every week.

Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."



hearts, hooves, healing...HOPE!

Three Cabins used as rustic bunk houses that volunteers, clients, visitors, and interns can stay in. Each cabin has electricity and is in the process of having the interiors finished.

The Rabbit barn houses our rabbits, rabbit food and supplies.

The Richard Schmidt cabin (existing recreation cabin) is used for programs for children or veteran uses.

The hay barn is storage for our square hay bales and small tools. (rakes, wheelbarrows, shovels, manure forks, etc.)

The current modular office (once the new building is done) will be reused for classes, meetings, smaller group activities, etc.

The existing pavilion is where we have space with picnic tables for people to eat, gather, play games, etc.

The Mercantile is a small store where we sell ranch merchandise and farm related items.

The pavilion in front of our Legacy Indoor Arena is ADA compliant (Operation EZ Access), allowing people with mobility issues to access our animals that we can bring to this central location so our visitors with challenges can have a positive experience too.

The ranch has four porta-johns, 2 handicap accessible and 2 standard sized units. These are pumped regularly by Clare County Septic. We have a monthly pump and clean and during heavy event time we have them cleaned before and after the event. Three are located by the Indoor Arena and one is located near the goat pen.

The Legacy Indoor Arena is 100x200 and has a tack room, observation room, grain room, 8 stalls, upstairs storage, and a 100x160 dirt floor arena.

The outdoor riding arena is 120x180.

The Center for Healing and Hope:

The structure is 60'x120' with porches added to these dimensions. The side walls will be 18 feet high with a 30 foot roof line at its highest point. Included within this space are offices, restrooms, storage space, and a Sensory Room for added regulation of the children, all of

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hearts, hooves, healing...HOPE!

which will assist us in complying with HIPPA privacy laws and ADA. A 28x22 commercial kitchen and a 48x60 Banquet Room will be a part of this space also.

The Banquet room will be used to host: Our own fundraising efforts, Project Solomon-our veteran programs, trainings, conferences, celebrations, church and partner gatherings, etc. Potential rental opportunities for the ranch to create sustainability. (Up to approximately 300 people).

Commercial Kitchen: we will be able to prepare the meals for Project Solomon. Our current program is every Tuesday from 10-12. We serve them a meal and then we spend time with our horses. We will be able to provide nutrition and life skills programming, community meals and outreach, fundraising events, fellowship and hospitality that build connection and dignity.

Our offices will be utilized by our Executive Director, Administrative staff, Volunteer coordinator, interns, mental health practitioners, veteran liaisons and equine manager.

Events:

HopeWell Ranch hosts

Farm Fair: Annually mid-May from 12-3pm and we can anticipate anywhere from 150-700 guests. This is a fun free family event where people come for carnival games for the children, animals, wagon rides, and barrel train rides. We have Culver's with their frozen custard, two food trucks, and tractors on display. Plus, we are inviting crafters to sell their wares at the ranch that day. The beginning of our event 12-12:30 we will have a "We Honor" veteran recognition opportunity with an Honor Guard, flag raising, Missing Man Table and special veteran prayers and poems.

Christmas in the Country: First Saturday in November and we had 700 people in attendance in 2025. This event is 1-3 pm. Culver's provides soup and chili, and we offer hot dogs, baked goods, Mrs. Claus' Closet in the Richard Schmidt cabin, which offers clothing products people can take for free, Carnival games and crafts for children, wagon and barrel train rides, animals, self-guided tours, a Nativity Walk, Father Christmas is in attendance, popcorn and hot cocoa bar, etc.

Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."



hearts, hooves, healing...HOPE!

Fall Fundraiser: This event is currently off site but will hopefully be held at our facility. This is a public event where 200-300 people may be attending where we offer a catered dinner, raffle baskets, live auction items, and testimonials.

Project Solomon will soon be shifting to every Tuesday from 9:30-2:30 for veterans to join us for a meal and horse time. (10-50 people have joined for this).

EAGALA (Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association) training: Once every two years HopeWell Ranch can host a training in the model for mental health that we use. This model is internationally known and followed. This training is for 30-40 people and is for 5 days. Typically it is from 8-5 pm on a Wednesday to Sunday. We try to offer this in June.

Eagala Services happen during the week for 60-90 minute sessions for children, veterans, families and individuals who need our services. These are typically offered Tuesday through Friday.

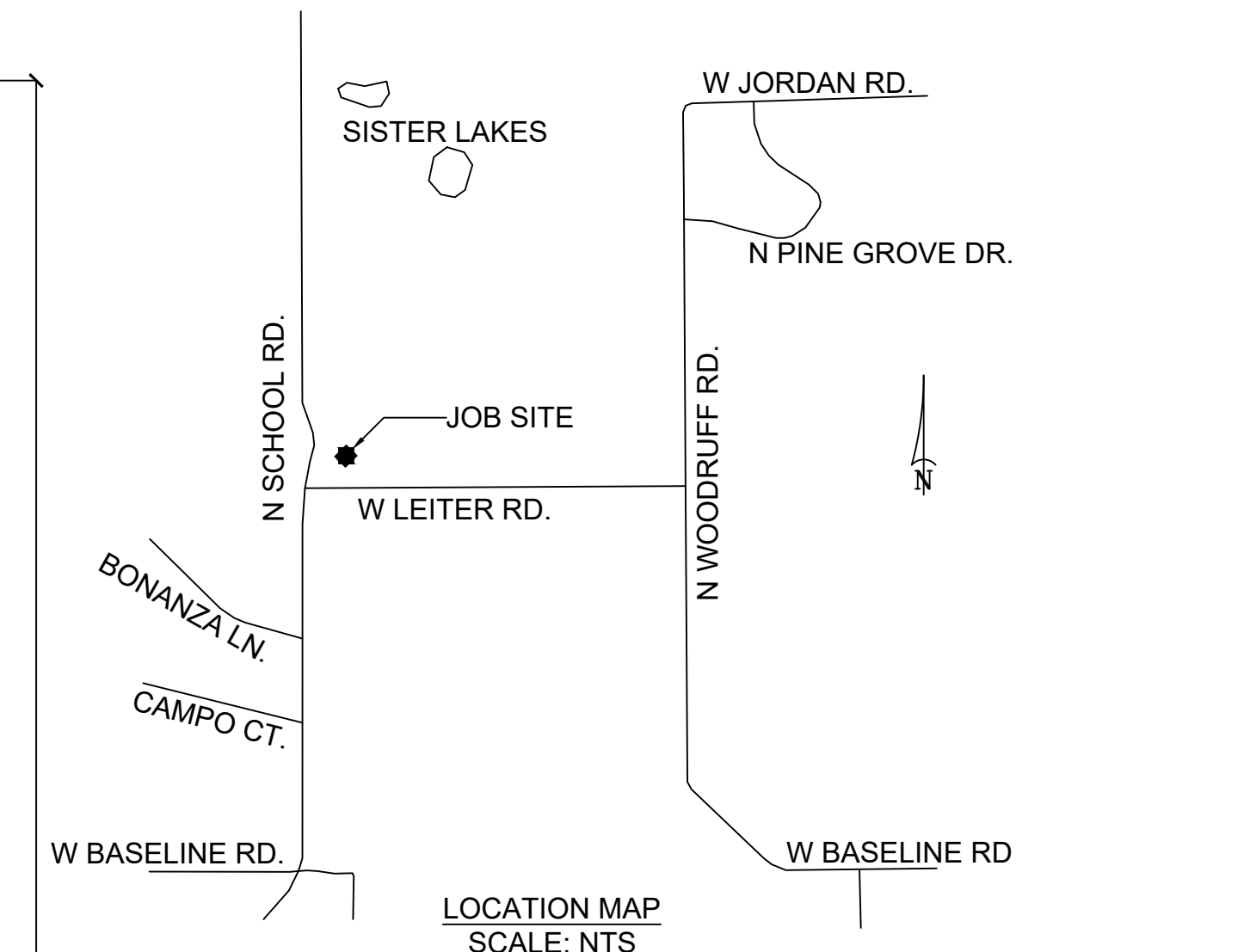
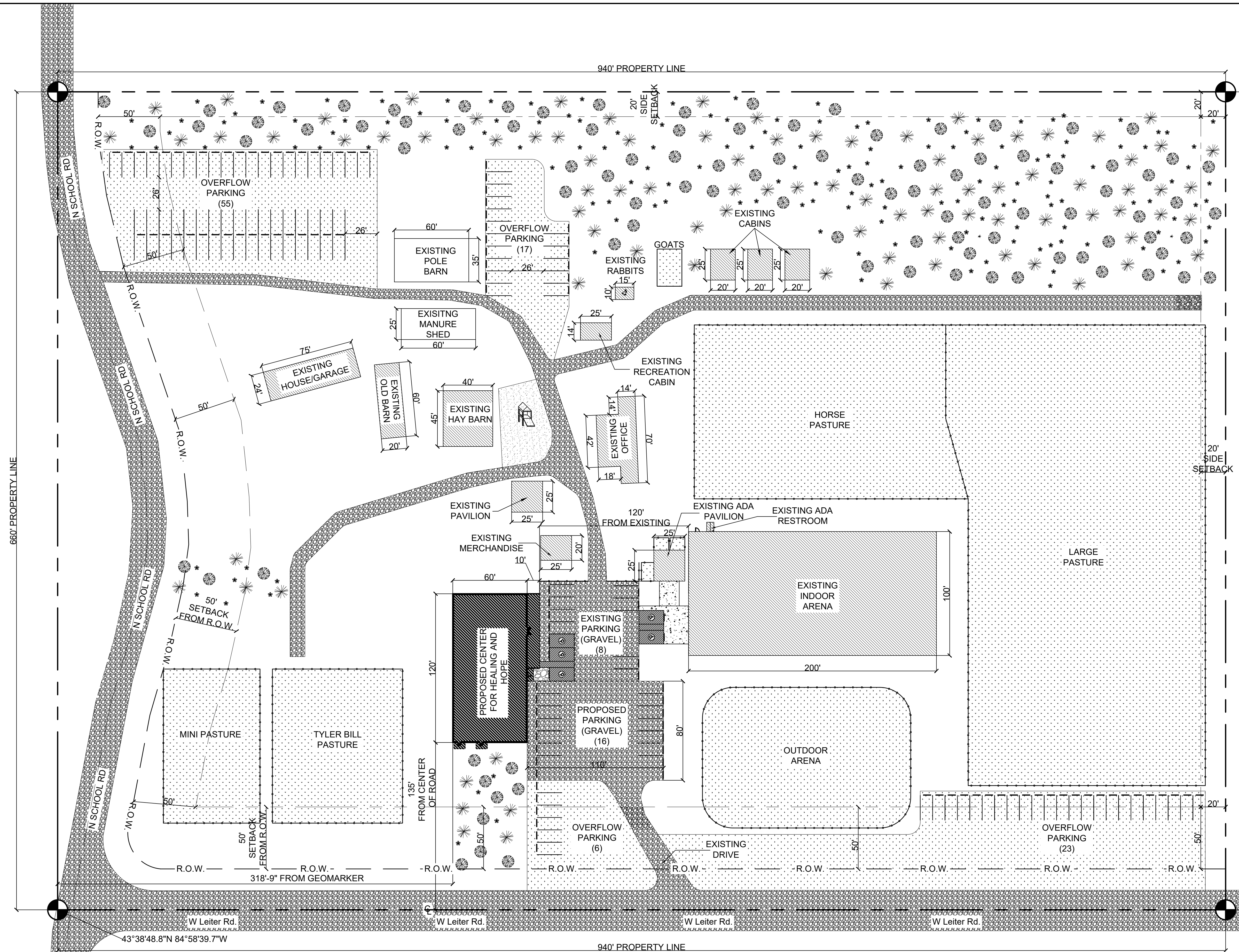
Volunteer Events: Orientations, tours, etc. These are usually 90 minutes in length and have been from 1-8 people in attendance.

Blessings,

Jodi Stuber

Executive Director

Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."



OWNER:
HOPEWELL RANCH
6410 W. LEITER RD.
WEIDMAN, MI, 48893

PARCEL#
13-036-20-006-10

ZONED: AG-3 SPECIAL USE

ZONED AG-3 SPECIAL USE

LOT AREA.....14.24 ACRES
LOT WIDTH.....940 FT
MINIMUM FRONT YARD SETBACK.....50 FT
MINIMUM SIDE YARD SETBACK.....20 FT

PROPERTY LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

SW 1/4 OF NE 1/4 SEC 36 T15N R6W SHERMAN TOWNSHIP
ISABELLA COUNTY MICHIGAN . REAL PROPERTY NUMBER
13-036-20-006-10

S 660 FT OF W 940 FT OF SW 1/4 OF NE 1/4 SEC 36 T15N R6W
SHERMAN TWP 14.24 A M.L. SPLIT FOR 2015 FROM 20-006-00 TO
20-006-05 & 20-006-10. ACREAGE EDITED PER ASSR 04-10-15

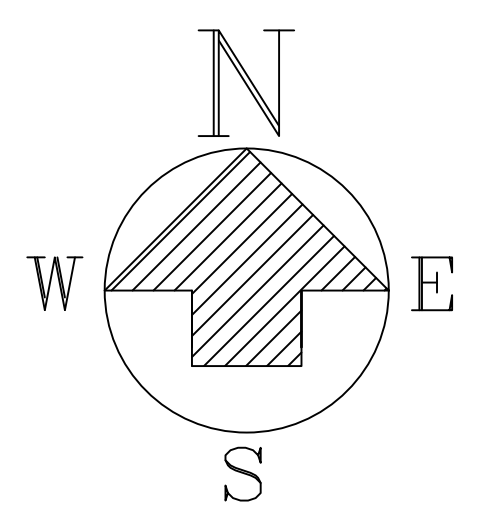
6' X 8" TYP. PARKING DIVIDER

PROPOSED BUILD HEIGHT:

EVE.....22'
PEAK.....24'-6"
MAXIMUM.....35'

TYP. PARKING SPACE DETAIL
SCALE: 2:1

REQUIRED.....115
MAXIMUM PARKING.....125
ADA PARKING.....5
VAN ACCESSIBLE.....4
OVERFLOW.....101



SITE PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 40'



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JBS JOB NUMBER:
DRAWING NAME: SITE
DRAWN BY: TAS
REVIEWED BY:
FIELD SUPERVISOR:
DATE: 02/25/2026
ENGINEER'S SEAL

HOPEWELL RANCH
6410 W LEITER RD.
WEIDMAN, MI 48893

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL
CONSTRUCTION

JBS Contracting Inc.
1680 COVER PARKWAY
MT. PLEASANT, MI 48858
PH: (989) 772-0170
FAX: (989) 772-9272

SCALE:
VARIES

C1
SITE PLAN

From: [Jodi Stuber](#)
To: [Ray Johnson](#)
Subject: Fwd: Letter of Support
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2026 11:02:45 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **brian Lownsbery** <lownsbery34@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 18, 2026 at 1:07 PM
Subject: Letter of Support
To: <jodistuber@hopewellranch.org>

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in strong support of Hopewell Ranch and its efforts to build a new facility that will expand its ability to serve individuals in need.

Through my personal experience with Hopewell Ranch, I have witnessed firsthand the powerful impact it has on those who come through its programs. The ranch provides a unique environment of peace, structure, and connection that is difficult to find elsewhere. It is a place where individuals can step away from the noise of daily life and begin to heal—mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Programs such as Project Solomon have been especially meaningful, offering veterans and others a space to reconnect, reflect, and rebuild. The combination of community, purpose, and faith-centered support creates lasting change that extends far beyond the time spent on the ranch.

As the need for these services continues to grow, expanding the facilities is not just beneficial—it is necessary. A new building would allow Hopewell Ranch to reach more people, provide additional programming, and deepen the level of care and support offered to each individual.

I believe strongly in the mission of Hopewell Ranch and the lives it is changing every day. Investing in this expansion is an investment in healing, restoration, and hope for countless individuals and families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brian Lownsbery

From: [Jodi Stuber](#)
To: [Ray Johnson](#)
Subject: Fwd: What Hopewell means to me.
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2026 11:03:58 AM

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Aaron lastfogel <aaronlastfogel1966@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 18, 2026 at 1:40 PM
Subject: What Hopewell means to me.
To: <jodistuber@hopewellranch.org>

My name is Aaron Lastfogel. I am a forgotten Veteran with PTSD, as well as numerous other mental health and physical health issues. Being honest, I'm very suicidal. And have severe issues with being around people. That is just a little about me.

Hopewell gives me a safe place to go to hang out with other veterans like myself. And I can't even begin to tell you how important Noble, my therapy horse, is to me. The thoughts fade away and for a while I can just relax. I'm also walking around and finding the rest of the animals here. Very de-stressing. My stepson is coming this summer for Unbridled. A program for kids that has crafts and also horseback riding. Kids that, like me, have had severely traumatic events in their lives. I go to a private counselor off site, I mention this because they have said that this Ranch is making a huge improvement on my mental health. From grinding teeth to smiling. There are so many events coming and I so look forward to doing them. Otherwise I would just be sitting at home staring into space without Hopewell. Something to look forward to. Any improvements to Hopewell would be an improvement for all of the vets and families served by them, and it would be a step up to get what is needed to open this all up to everyone that needs help.

Thank You Aaron

March 13, 2026

To whom it may concern,

My name is Beth Abbott, and I am a retired Marine, 3-time Combat Veteran of nearly 22 years of active-duty service in the United States Marine Corps. I have served all over America and the globe. I retired on June 30, 2025, as a First Sergeant. I am originally from Blanchard, Michigan and I reside in Stafford, Virginia where I share custody of my two kids, who are my whole world.

I heard about HopeWell Ranch about 9 months ago, when a family friend started volunteering there and I knew I had to get over there and get involved the next time I came home to visit. I can come home once a month for a week at a time now since retiring and it feels amazing to have that freedom of movement. Recently in February, I was able to attend the Veterans group called Project Solomon on Tuesday mornings from 9:30am until 12:30pm. It was so impactful and powerful, just being in a room of like-minded people, veterans of all ages. We were able to break bread, eat some amazing food and open up to one another, because that safe space fostered an environment where we could take off our armor and feel a bit free and safe with one another. After that, we were walked over to the horse area where two amazing women led us through some equine therapy with three different horses and that not only got our minds flowing, but it opened us up to talking about our feelings and as you know that is something most veterans are not fond of. There was also a licensed psychologist there as well and between her and the Equine EAGALA trained certified professional, they were able to lead and guide us through a series of very important, tough questions to start a process of what I like to call learning how to struggle well, which I learned from Boulder Crest Foundation. I believe with the right program and certified training they could implement a program for veterans called "Post Traumatic Growth" or PTG, and they could further their outreach and studies in helping veterans and their families with their every day life struggles.

Project Solomon is a spot-on, much-needed program that has already helped so many veterans and their families. If HopeWell Ranch had more resources and spaces for veterans and their families to gather, I truly believe this would grow bigger and reach more people. Right now, some people drive 3 hours to be there, learn and grow for a 4-hour session, so the need and want is there! There is a massive need for a bigger facility, a larger kitchen to accommodate the needs of this amazing program and an added-on banquet hall to this larger facility to help service and support the veterans and their families. Right now, what they have is a small room where barely 12 veterans could fit in there comfortably and eat together without touching elbows. The importance of this program is huge, and the greater need is right now and here.

This program SAVES LIVES. This program SAVES FAMILIES. This program is 100% needed and wanted and HopeWell Ranch! They do an amazing job every Tuesday with Project Solomon, but it is very limited in space and numbers due to facilities and funding.

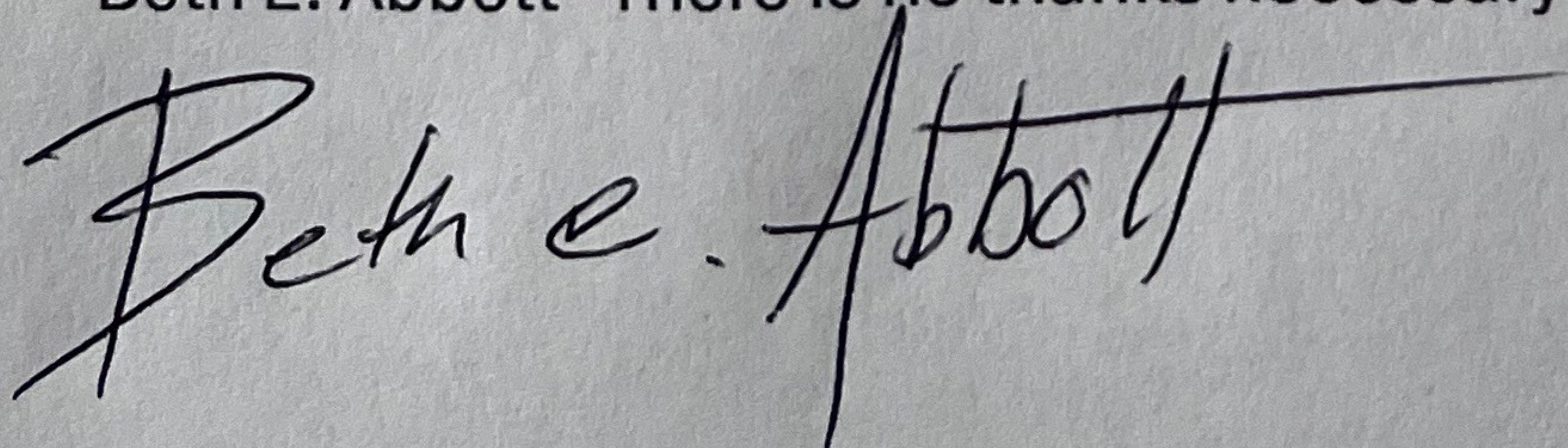
I know firsthand how much these programs mean and how much they change lives, save lives and help forge families back together. I know how they foster safe spaces for veterans to talk, whether someone served back before Vietnam, or after, or whether someone went to combat or not, most of us all share a command bond not only one of service and sacrifice, but that of some kind of trauma. I was able to attend a program at Boulder Crest Foundation called Warrior PATHH (progressive and alternative training for helping heroes) in Bluemont, Virginia and it is a 5-day program for veterans, 14 hours a day. That program focused on connecting your head and your heart and teaching us how to respond rather than react. All of this was possible, because of funding, available space, a very structured program and a staff (most paid) and some are volunteers, because they have the funding and the resources. They have an intense program that touches on childhood trauma, a family tree, a personal timeline of life, post traumatic growth from service, combat or regular life, stress, depression, anxiety, military and non-military sexual trauma, this program not only changed who I am and changed my life, but it saved my life. If this type of program with implemented, needed structure, appropriate funding and resources could get settled at HopeWell Ranch, I 100% believe that Project Solomon could take off in the right direction and be able to not only affect so many more Veterans lives and families, but untimely connect us together, fostering a community where we feel safe and save lives.

Please understand the need, want and desire to grow Project Solomon in order to help veterans, forge their lives and families lives back together and ultimately foster an environment of community, fellowship and connection, while saving lives! The only thing missing with this is funding, a bigger facility, a kitchen and a banquet room. HopeWell Ranch does the best they can with what they have, but they are so limited in resources. The need and want is there, TRUST ME! Let's come together and save more veterans, because the number of suicides a day is well above 22 now. A program like Project Solomon that is properly outfitted, fully funded and resources could help and save lives and to me THAT IS WORTH IT! Every time I go home, I go back on a Tuesday, and I will until I can't anymore.

Thank you for your time and efforts on this serious matter. Should you have any questions, I can be reach on my cell phone at 989-400-3817 or via email Beth.e.abbott@gmail.com

God Bless America, her Veterans, all who are serving right now and their families!

Beth E. Abbott "There is no thanks necessary for what is called duty."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth e. Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Terry L. Hoffman

1134 N Johnson Rd
Weidman, MI 48893

February 25, 2026

Isabella County Planning Commission
200 N Main St, Room 105
Mt. Pleasant, MI. 48858

Dear Commissioners,

There is a place about one mile from my home where people come together for support, fellowship, to share and to grow. The people come from many different counties, demographics, life experiences and ages with at least one thing in common: they need to heal. So they gather. Then something amazing happens; they join the herd, or more accurately, the herd joins them.

The horses of HopeWell Ranch, many having experienced their own trauma and rehabilitation, help turn human anxiety, doubt, confusion and loneliness into something softer, less pervasive, more peaceful and hopeful. Children gain confidence, veterans find trusted confidants and all experience love without judgement.

When I learned about the mission of HopeWell Ranch, I knew it was the opportunity I was looking for to support a Christian mission I truly believe in. That is why I volunteer at least twice each week to help the ranch run. My volunteer days are a highlight of my week, and I'm so proud to know this great work is taking place right here in my small community.

The HopeWell staff does an impressive job of serving program participants and being good stewards of the available resources, especially when Michigan weather turns hostile. While there is plenty of space for all of the animals, the human areas are nearing capacity.

Imagine how the HopeWell programs could expand if there were more indoor space available. The proposed Center for Healing and Hope will make it possible to grow participation, incorporate complimentary programs and help to spread the mission through transparent visibility. Given the current level of support, I'm confident the Center will be a welcome addition to our community.

Sincerely yours,

Terry L. Hoffman

March 20, 2026

Dear Isabella County,

My name is Tracy Palmer and I live in Mt. Pleasant. Almost five years ago I caught COVID-19 and became very ill. I never seemed to get better. I was then referred to a heart and lung specialist who ran every test he could to figure out what was wrong with me. He finally took me in for a heart catheter. I never left the hospital and immediately went into a 5-bypass heart surgery. It took me a very long time to recuperate. Becoming very anxious and depressed. Not wanting to even leave my house, because it was just too much for me to handle emotionally and physically. As of 2023 I have been on disability and in 2024 moved to the Mt. Pleasant area. A good friend of mine introduced me to her sister who at the time worked for HopeWell Ranch. Coming from a horse and farm background from childhood, I immediately felt at home at HopeWell. The staff let me do what I could to build up my strength and confidence. I suffered greatly from anxiety and PTSD. The first time I went into the pasture with the horses, they really helped me by just being there and giving me that unconditional love. I started to get stronger as time went by purely by being with the horses and the staff of the ranch. The ranch personnel treat me as family and uplift me in my troubled times. I started to work more behind the scenes of all the wonderful events we have for the community and programs for the children in Isabella County. Along with our Project Solomon veteran program that I have recently started helping with. I see the passion and the vision at the ranch and want to help build that dream. I now work through AARP SCSEP program and have become the office manager at HopeWell Ranch and love every moment of it. Without HopeWell I believe I would have not gotten better. This ranch has truly saved my life.

Sincerely,
Tracy Palmer

From: [Jodi Stuber](#)
To: [Ray Johnson](#)
Subject: Letter of Support
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2026 2:51:11 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Here is a letter from Bill Funnell

I'm writing on behalf and in support of HopeWell Ranch.

My first contact was about three years ago. My wife passed away five years ago. We were both avid deer hunters. Upon her passing, I was left with a freezer full of venison. After asking around, people informed me that HopeWell Ranch would accept it. I contacted Jodi and she agreed to take it so I delivered it shortly thereafter, and met a friendly woman - Jodi - who made me feel like I was part of the family. She told me about the ranch and about Project Solomon on Tuesday mornings, when she hosts a brunch and visiting hour, and later, an hour of therapy with the friendliest group of horses that you'll encounter in your lifetime. Those in attendance can brush, lead, and yes, even talk to the horses. I agreed to attend Tuesday and met with about fifteen to twenty individuals that I had never seen before. After a few Tuesdays of feeling kind of awkward, I soon had a group of people I took the privilege to call my friends.

HopeWell Ranch is a place where veterans and some service dogs are welcomed to visit and interact with other veterans, relax, and share a wonderful meal.

The friendship and therapy with the horses is priceless for these veterans, and the many other events they are involved in are priceless.

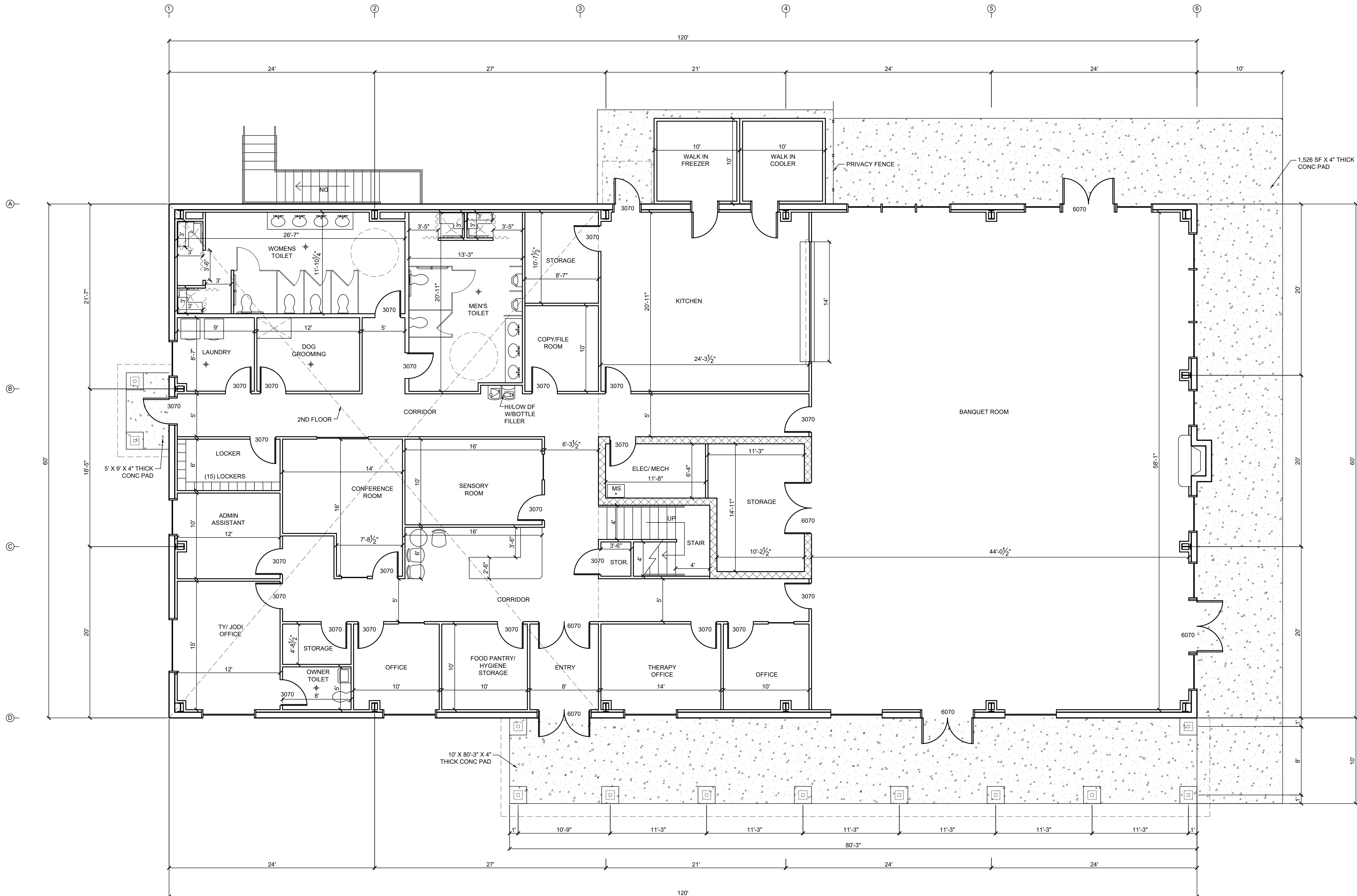
HopeWell Ranch is a blessing for these veterans. A lack of space is the only reason that we can't receive more veterans to join and enjoy the friendship and the events that HopeWell schedules for these individuals.

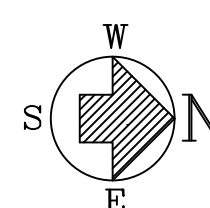
The ranch and Jodi are working tirelessly to improve this situation by trying to come up with many more great ideas.

This new building will benefit the many children's programs, the veterans, and the entire community years into the future.

Thank you for hearing about my adventures at HopeWell Ranch.

William Funnell
1507 E Beal City Rd
Mt Pleasant, MI 48858




FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



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SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

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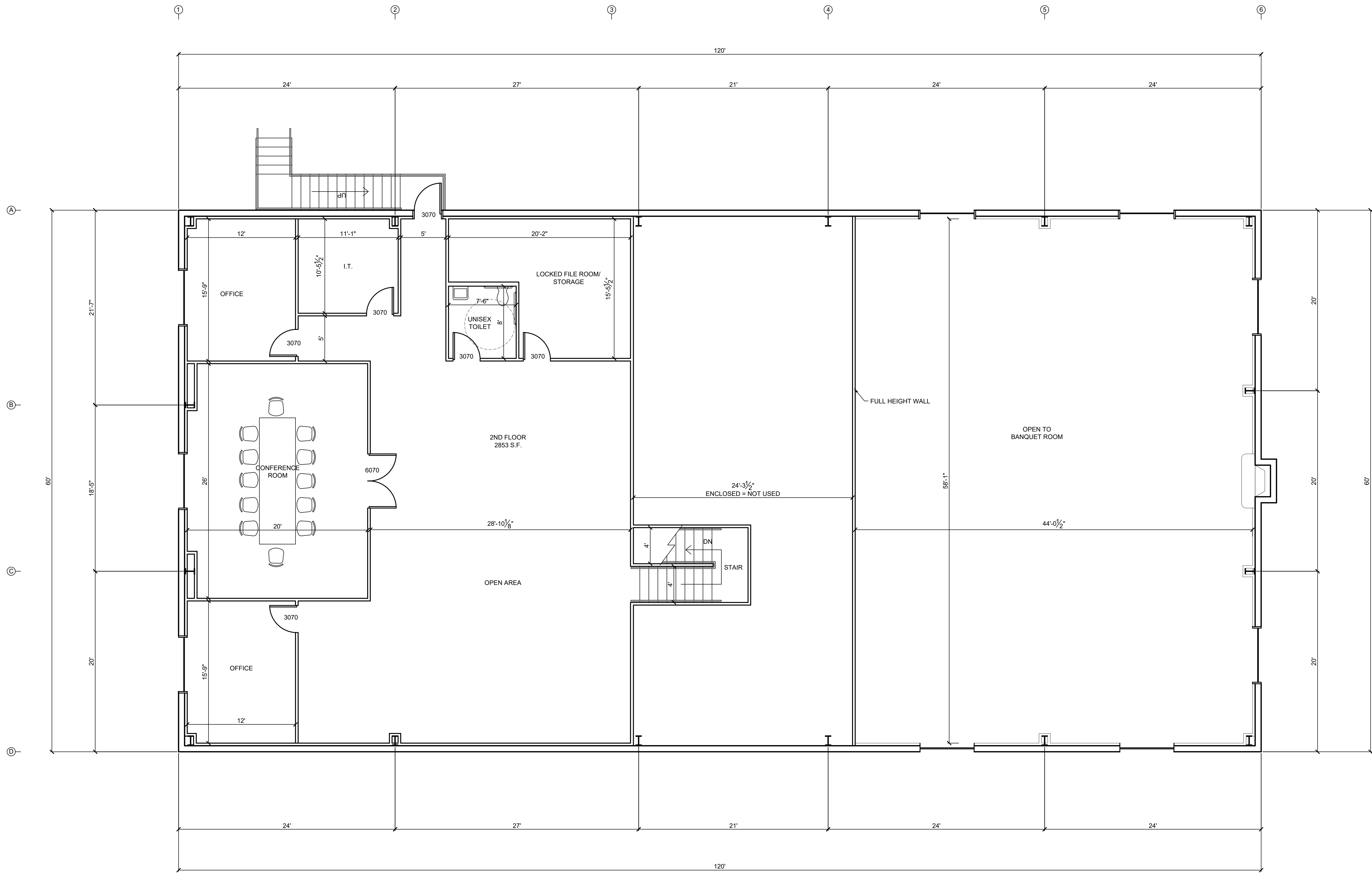
HOPEWELL RANCH

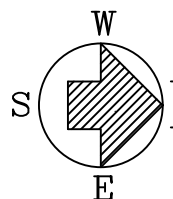
JBS JOB NUMBER:
 DRAWING NAME: FLOOR PLAN
 DRAWN BY: DKG
 REVIEWED BY:
 FIELD SUPERVISOR:
 DATE: 3/17/2026
 ENGINEER'S SEAL

HOPEWELL RANCH
 6410 W LEITER RD.
 WEIDMAN, MI 48893

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL
 CONSTRUCTION

JBS Contracting Inc.
 1680 COVER PARKWAY
 MT. PLEASANT, MI 48858
 PH: (989) 772-0170
 FAX: (989) 772-9272




2ND FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



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SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

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HOPEWELL RANCH

HOPEWELL RANCH
 6410 W LEITER RD.
 WEIDMAN, MI 48893

JBS Contracting Inc.
 COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL
 CONSTRUCTION

JBS Contracting Inc.
 1680 COVER PARKWAY
 MT. PLEASANT, MI 48858
 PH: (989) 772-0170
 FAX: (989) 772-9272

JBS JOB NUMBER:
 DRAWING NAME: 2ND FLOOR PLAN
 DRAWN BY: DKG
 REVIEWED BY:
 FIELD SUPERVISOR:
 DATE: 3/17/2026
 ENGINEER'S SEAL