

It's Woody vs. Phil in Sunday's other big contest

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Zoom

While the thermometer reads in the single digits, it is hoped by many that Woody the Woodchuck will predict temperatures closer to where her nose points arriving in our area sooner rather than later. Woody will make her prediction on Groundhog Day at the Howell Conference and Nature Center. / GILLIS BENEDICT/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

Early end to winter?

Livingston County's own Woody the Woodchuck will make her Groundhog Day prediction on the arrival of spring — and a certain football [game](#)

It's Woody vs. Phil in Sunday's other big contest

— Sunday at the Howell Conference and Nature Center, 1005 Triangle

[↗](#) Lake Road in Marion Township. Doors open at 7:45 a.m., with the predictions set for 8:15 a.m. The family-friendly event is free. Admission to a pancake breakfast after the predictions is \$8 for adults, \$6 for children or free for those 2 and younger. Call 517-546-0249 for a breakfast reservation.

There's a big faceoff coming Sunday, and not the one between football's Denver Broncos and Seattle Seahawks.

We're talking about the long-running Groundhog Day rivalry between Livingston County's own Woody the Woodchuck and Punxsutawney Phil, the better-known contender from the east.

Woody's 11-4 record in predictions over the past 15 years is unmatched, say the folks at the Howell Conference and Nature Center, Woody's [home](#)

[↗](#)

"It's a pretty good record," Executive Director Dick Grant said. "I think Phil's only about 50-50."

But those on Team Phil consider any rival a pretender to the throne.

"Phil's the oldest, he's the original, and he's the wisest," said Michele Neal, executive director of the Punxsutawney Chamber of Commerce.

"Whatever he says will be right, somewhere."

He's also big [business](#)

[↗](#) . Chamber offices include a Phil gift shop, and the Pennsylvania city is also home to a new Phil museum.

Woody comes with no such amenities, but her [winning](#)

 record doesn't just extend to the weather.

She's also 6-2 in her Super Bowl picks and is riding a three-year winning streak.

"The last time she was wrong was in 2010," Grant said.

That was also the last time superstar quarterback Peyton Manning played in the big game. So, Broncos fans might want to pay extra attention to Woody's prediction.

Woody will make both her picks at a program beginning 7:45 a.m. at the center, south of Howell at 1005 Triangle Lake Road in Marion Township

Her predictions are due at 8:15 a.m., with a pancake breakfast to follow at 9 a.m.

Admission to Woody's prediction is free. Breakfast is \$8 for adults, \$6 for children or free to those 2 and younger. To register, call 517-546-0249.

Youngsters are invited to dress in costume to [compete](#)

 for prizes including a free week of summer day camp at the center.

Though this is the first time it has coincided with Super Bowl Sunday, Groundhog Day's annual Feb. 2 date is significant.

"It's the day that falls halfway between the beginning of winter and the beginning of spring," Grant said.

Despite the friendly rivalry, Grant and Neal — like everyone else — are hoping their groundhogs predict an early end to this long, cold winter.

"That would be nice," Neal said. "But they'll predict what they'll predict."

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