



Streetscape project gets a green light

TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO
The 30 or so meeting attendants get a closer look at artistic renderings of the new trees, to be planted for the Streetscape project. The trees will be planted to create an intentional pattern of color.

► Downtown project to break ground in spring 2015

By Tim Jagielo
tjagiello@tctimes.com; 810-433-6795
Fenton — On Wednesday, business owners and stakeholders got a glimpse of what downtown Fenton will look like next year when they

examined new composite images of downtown Fenton in the city council chambers.

The satellite image of the street was overlaid with what the street
See STREETScape on 8A

Weekend Times

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2012 - 2013 - 2014 Newspaper of the Year

Only 52 percent of area school buses pass state inspection

► Fenton and Linden schools have one of the highest fail rates

By Yvonne Stegall
ystegall@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

Of 129 local school buses, 67 received a passing grade in the state's school bus inspection results from a total of four inspections

completed between Sept. 1, 2013, and Aug. 31, 2014, according to the Michigan State Police's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division's annual report.

Fenton and Linden schools fell into some of the highest rates of failed inspections. Linden Community Schools had 23 of 33 buses receive a red grade and Fenton Area Public Schools had 20 of 44 buses in the red. Red means they
See SCHOOL BUSES on 14A

TRI-COUNTY TIMES
FILE PHOTO

Many school buses fail the MSP inspection — it can be for something as trivial as ripped foam on seats. Most schools fix issues immediately after inspection.



Prices at the pump drop below \$2 in Oklahoma

► Could it happen here?

By Yvonne Stegall
ystegall@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

A quick conversation with Doug Smith at Smitty's Exit80 would make you believe it's definitely a possibility. "It could happen," he said. In fact, he said Monday night it already dropped 13 cents.

According to recent reports, last week, the Organization of the
See PRICES on 13A

Health insurance co-pays vary wildly

► State, auto industry employees pay least, private industry the most

By Tim Jagielo
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It's open enrollment time for the Affordable Care Act (ACA). So for some, their insurance rates will soon be up in the air. The rates for some will increase, while others may get a better deal.

Of course, if your workplace offers insurance, it will change as well — but your rate may depend on your profession.

See INSURANCE on 6A

A Dicken's of a festival

See story on Page 22A



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

More than 1,000 visitors fill downtown Holly during the 2014 Holly Dickens Festival kick-off last weekend. The event was a huge success, and included a lighted parade, the Holly High School Marching Band, a tree-lighting ceremony — and of course, a visit from Santa Claus. The festival continues this weekend and next, with different activities for each.

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**TEXT
YOUR
HOT LINE**



“Would someone, anyone, please share with me any benefit to any American citizen that giving amnesty to five million illegal immigrants will provide?”



“Yes, I can name all 50 states. Why? I went to North Road School 27 years ago, I learned how to sing the states in alphabetical order in less than 1 minute. It was either Mrs. Bruder or Mrs. Toonder.”



“The message of Ferguson, Missouri is that race relations in America are deteriorating, not improving. Both whites and blacks are equally responsible. I am black and work in Fenton, nobody treats me any different than what I am — an American.”



**tctimes.com
COMMENT OF
THE WEEK**

“Deporting all illegal immigrants is a terrible idea. That would mean Joe Biden would be our president.”

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CORNERSTONE BUILDING OPEN FOR BUSINESS!

This week, two more of the four businesses in the new Cornerstone building opened. The Rough Draught served its first drinks last week.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

"Food with drama" is a fitting tagline for Sagano Japanese Bistro and Steakhouse. On Thursday these diners experienced the first night the restaurant was open for business in Fenton.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

In early November, Gordon Jamison of Jamison Construction attaches ornamental stone to the entrance wall of what will be the Diamond Room at Sawyer Jewelers. The business opted to open in January in order to best serve their customers during this holiday season.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

Salon 416 hairstylist Collette Spring does a balayage coloring for a client on Thursday. "We've been swamped," she said.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES
TIM JAGIELO

(Left) Head Bartender David Martinez makes a "Clark's Revenge" bourbon and agave cocktail for this photo. (Right) The Rough Draught Café & Barroom was the first business to open in the new Cornerstone building.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES



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Don't hate them, pity them

Well, my favorite day of the year has come and gone. I am speaking, of course, of the Thanksgiving Day celebration where we give thanks for our many blessings. It's a wonderful day when families and friends gather together to celebrate the good fortune in their life with wonderful food, friends and family. There is a sense of tradition ingrained in the day that prevents even the wackiest of us from trying to stain the day by launching a diatribe against killing plump, tasty birds or giving thanks to God for our blessings. There is an aura about the day that most of us find reassuring — primarily because it has remained unchanged since we were children.

I must have said 'have a great Thanks-

giving' to a hundred friends, acquaintances and associates over the last couple of weeks. And they returned the same sentiment to me. No one admonished me for bird cruelty, or the gluttony of an overflowing dinner table, or for watching football. It was, and always is, a wonderful and uniquely American day of celebration.

However, we now enter the slippery slope of the Christmas season — a season that is accompanied by apprehension for many — due to the agenda of a few. It doesn't seem to matter that for the vast majority of American citizens Christmas, at its core, is a celebration of the birth of Jesus. The many, have allowed a few, to denigrate a benchmark of

faith that — until about 20 years ago — actually was 'the most wonderful time of the year.'

Many of us are now troubled — but not overly — by this attempted tempering of the celebration of the birth of Jesus. I, for one, wonder what the endgame of those responsible is. When you consider the enormous efforts that have been expended to demonize Christmas, what could possibly be their motivation? Do they really believe that doing away with Christmas trees, Nativity scenes, Rudolph, eggnog, mistletoe and giving gifts to people you love will be beneficial to America? Well, the eggnog maybe — hard to argue with that.

The only possible explanation is that these individuals hate many of the things that make most of us happy: smiling chil-

“Do they really believe that doing away with Christmas trees, Nativity scenes, Rudolph, eggnog, mistletoe and giving gifts to people you love will be beneficial to America?”

dren, church pews filled with families, decorated Christmas trees, colorful stockings hung by the chimney with care and manger scenes in front yards.

They should be pitied, not hated. They are missing one of life's great joys — the timeless magic of the Christmas season.

Besides, any Christian knows that Christmas is not about displays in malls, it is about a spiritual event that we celebrate with our families and in our homes.

So, Merry Christmas fellow Christians, and Happy Holidays to the rest of you.

There. The war on Christmas is now officially ended.

Opinions offered in If I Were King are the author's alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Tri-County Times or its staff. Email the King at king@tctimes.com. Some content adapted from the internet.



Hot lines

Submit at: tctimes.com, call 810-629-9221 or text to 810-771-8398

All submissions, if approved for publication, must be 50 words or less and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Tri-County Times. We reserve the right to edit for clarity, length and liability.

OBAMA'S AMNESTY PLAN will give incentive to hire immigrants before citizens because of Obamacare costs — \$40 billion a year. Constitutionally, only Congress has immigration and funding powers. Obama says he will veto any congressional budget bill without amnesty funding. Government shutdown. Whose fault? Obama? Congress?

I UNDERSTAND THAT name calling is a common liberal tactic against anyone who disagrees with their philosophy but I resent the writer calling me a hater because I disagree with Obama. Apply that logic to marriages. If everyone who disagreed with their spouse hated their spouse, there would be no families.

SEN. KOWALL CLAIMS we don't understand tax legislating. Oh really? While plotting a tax increase at the pumps, legislators were campaigning under the guise of Prop-one's jobs promises to give big business their largest tax cut ever. They got the gold, now we're getting the shaft.

A GOOD POLICE officer who just did his job resigned from the Ferguson, Missouri police force. He resigned because news media propaganda incited riots and made the Ferguson Police Department the target of violent criminals. The news media propaganda is dangerous to our democracy, and rule of law.

IF YOU THINK Obama 'created laws' with the illegal immigration executive order, then it just shows how you are ignorant on the subject and/or you like Fox News. Wouldn't you rather not look stupid when your opinion is published?

SHAME ON THE girl who put a shoe in the locker room toilet after swim lessons ended at 8 p.m. at FHS Wednesday. That shoe belonged to a very nice elderly lady who certainly didn't deserve it. What an awful thing to do.

IT'S BEGINNING TO look like Christmas. Just drove through Fenton last night and love the lighted and decorated light poles. It looks great!

THE POLICE KEEP us safe. Ninety-nine percent are wonderful. Be careful with the broad brush of judgment. There could come a time when they decide they no longer wish to risk their lives for an ungrateful public. Thank you police officers, you are appreciated.

THANK YOU EVER YONE who helped carry on Nancy Stockham's tradition of providing a Thanksgiving basket to those in need in our community. It was a great day!

OBAMA INVITES AL Sharpton to the White House as an advisor. Al Sharpton owes \$4.5 million in back taxes.

THIS MORNING THE front page of my southern liberal paper featured a picture of the national tree in Washington. If I hadn't read the article I would have thought it was a dunce cap, it looks like one. Very appropriate.

A CRIMINAL IS a criminal and when he tries to beat up a police officer and grab the officer's gun and he gets shot, that's not unreasonable. They shouldn't even bring in that he's black, he's a criminal.

See **HOT LINE** throughout Times

Readers write

Letters, 150 words or less, must be signed and include a phone number. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and liability. Letters must be written exclusively for the Times.

Girl Scout project

Dear Editor,
I am a Girl Scout leader out of Holly Elementary. My troop is currently learning about our community and what is important to us. For a part of our project, the girls are reaching out to our town on a topic that is important to them. Here is what they wrote:
'We don't like people writing bad things on the play structures in our town. It's inappropriate for younger kids. Little kids could copy the bad words. It makes playgrounds less beautiful. How would you feel if people wrote on the things you cared about? Please stop ruining our play structures! — Girl Scout Troop #71126'

— **Shannon Houfek, Holly**

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Compiled by Christopher Jones, staff reporter

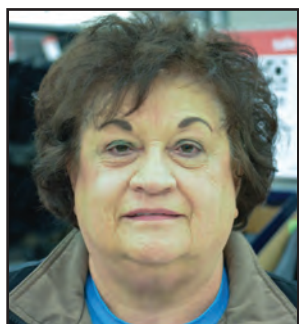
How has your health insurance changed over the last two years?

streettalk



"I have VA so I don't have to mess with any of the companies."

— Richard Pratt
Holly Township



"I pay more for prescriptions. My husband had Alzheimer's and it cost a lot to keep him in the nursing home."

— Caroline Burke, Fenton



"I originally had Blue Cross/Blue Shield. It became too expensive with the price and the increase."

— Steve Berman, Linden



"Some prescriptions cost more and it's harder for a retired person on a fixed income."

— Patricia Flick
Fenton



"My girlfriend got on the extended Medicaid, so she went from none to having some."

— Joshua Kirchner
Grand Blanc



"The prices have gone up. They raise it every half-year."

— John Locke
Linden

Animal advocates file lawsuit to freeze funds

►Increased GCAC funding plan doesn't address care of animals

By Yvonne Stegall

ystegall@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

The group GRACE, Genesee County Residents for Animal Control Evolution, filed a lawsuit on Wednesday, Dec. 3 against county commissioners Ted Henry and Pegge Adams, and the Genesee County Board of Commissioners for violation of the Open Meetings Act.

After the November election, new reportedly animal-friendly commissioners were voted onto the board, but they don't take their seats until January. In the meantime, some of the current commissioners are pushing to put in place a proposal for the \$1.7 million millage that was passed last month. This push has animal activists in Genesee County in arms.

According to GRACE's post after the last meeting on Wednesday, "They first brought it up at the board meeting immediately following the election. The Board instructed them to go back to the Animal Control Advisory Committee to work with that group to devise a comprehensive plan."

The plan they came back with was put together by Animal Control Director Stepheni Lazar. Known as animal-friendly commissioners, Jamie Curtis, Mark Young and Tony Brown argued against the plan. Because not all of the committee members had been considered when the plan was devised, and had not contributed to it at all, the plan was not heard at that time.

GRACE's Facebook page stated, "For much of the past two years, Henry and Adams have been able to secure support from at least three other commissioners. This allowed them to have a majority of votes and to block any proposals for improvements at GCAC that Curtis, Young or Brown would bring forward. However, because informed voters supported animal-friendly commissioner candidates in this year's elections, we are looking forward to January when a fair and more compassionate Board will take over. We think Henry and Adams expect that too, which is why they are pushing so hard to get their agenda approved before year end."

GRACE's lawsuit stems from the claim that Henry and Adams scheduled a meeting with the Animal Control Ad-

visory Committee for Wednesday, Nov. 26, the day before Thanksgiving and the meeting was only posted to the public the day prior to the actual meeting.

Because this committee includes several county commissioners, and because this committee has the power to refer items to the full Board for consideration, these meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act.

The last minute notice not only kept the public from attending, it also caused several of the committee members to be absent. During the public comment portion of this meeting, GRACE member Richard Angelo stood and instructed the committee that he felt they were in violation of the Open Meetings Act.

At the meeting this past week, Henry and Adams asked for an add-on agenda item at the Government Operations Com-

mittee. As the chairman for the committee, Commissioner Omar Sims allowed this, and despite 'no' votes from animal-

friendly commissioners Curtis, Brown and Young, and an additional 'no' vote from Archie Bailey, the Board voted 5 to 4 to approve Lazar's plan. This plan includes the hiring of more full-time employees, but nothing about changing the care or conditions for the animals.

As previously reported, Brown said, "The issue isn't going away merely by throwing money at it."

GRACE members are hoping this lawsuit will freeze up the funds until the new board members can take their seats and come up with a plan that helps the animals. Roberta Angelo, one of the GRACE team, said, "My biggest hope is that this new Board will make good decisions for GCAC and hire the right people to run it."

“My biggest hope is that this new Board will make good decisions for GCAC and hire the right people to run it.”

Roberta Angelo
GRACE

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By: Dr. Steven Sulfaro

BITING FORCE

When your upper and lower teeth bite together they can exert a lot of pressure. Natural upper and lower teeth can produce upward of 240 pounds per square inch. This force allows us to adequately chew and digest the food we need for ideal health and nutrition. When teeth are lost most of this chewing power is lost as well. Studies show that the average bite force for those folks with dentures is often times less than 10 pounds per square inch. With minimal residual biting ability, denture wearers are unable to chew and digest their food as before. This can lead to poor nutrition and make control of other disease conditions like diabetes and heart disease difficult. There is good news, however. I am happy to report that the placement of special dental implant anchors under an existing denture can GREATLY increase the biting and chewing efficiency of a denture wearer. In fact, an implant retained denture wearer has virtually the same biting efficiency as they did when they had their natural teeth. This can greatly enhance their quality of life and improve their health and nutrition. If you or someone you know and love is a denture wearer contact my office by dialing 248-634-4671 today to schedule a free, no obligation consultation to see if dental implants are right for you.

I welcome your questions and comments. Feel free to e-mail me drsulfaro@comcast.net



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INSURANCE

Continued from Front Page

The Times has compiled what people in different professions might contribute monthly for insurance, but if you're curious as to what your insurance might cost if you enrolled today, WebMD has a handy calculator, based on the middle, "Silver" package of the ACA.

For example, this reporter, under that package would pay \$209 per month, with a maximum annual premium of \$2,512 under the "Silver" plan. Getting a more

Summary

► On average, city and state employees contribute 20 percent to their health care premiums, which increases the more family members they cover. For anyone wondering what they may soon be paying, check out the calculator on WebMD.

accurate or possibly cheaper rating requires more detailed information submitted.

Another reporter at the office, with the family plan, pays about \$1,400 per month in premiums to cover them, their spouse and 19-year-old dependent. In addition to this, they have a \$3,500 deductible, which must be met before insurance coverage kicks in.

Anyone basically on their own or operating a business would be in the same boat, checking in on an independent insurance policy on the marketplace.

For a family of four, with an income of \$65,000, and the oldest person in the family at 45, the rate could be \$477 per month, but the website advises that a subsidy might be possible.

So what do local professionals contribute to their insurance? Asking about an "average" payment



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | FILE PHOTO

All city employees, whether police or an office worker, contribute 20 percent each month to their health insurance, which is dependent on a bevy of factors. Here, Fenton police officers Nick Jones along with Dan Forbush and Lt. Jason Slater work through an active shooter simulation in 2013.

for someone in a particular profession locally is still a big question, with lots of variables.

Linden Community Schools Assistant Superintendent Michael Engelter attempted to answer just that for an average teacher in LCS. He used an example teacher with full family coverage with a \$200 annual deductible.

With a small deductible plan, the monthly cost for health insurance is \$1,687.92. He said that PA152 places a cap on the amount the district can contribute toward an employee's health insurance premium. He said that the monthly cap amount LCS can contribute is \$1,331.27, which leaves the employee to pay the difference each month of \$356.65.

At the city of Fenton, employees insured under the city pay 20 percent of their monthly insurance fee. Clerk Renee Wilson gave examples of a single person, a couple and a family. These employees include police (public safety), public works, and office staff.

For a single person's HMO, the fee would be 20 percent of \$527.92, or \$105.60 per month. An employee insuring a couple would pay \$242.844. An employee covering a family pays \$285.

Wilson said insurance plans and rates change each year, with a 5-percent in-

crease in 2014. "We are constantly looking at our options in an effort to control costs and still provide a quality plan," she said.

From administrative staff to the State Police, the State of Michigan also pays 80 percent of the State Health Plan PPO, and employees pay 20 percent.

For a single person, they might pay \$123.60 a month, while the state contributes the rest. For a family, the employee would pay about \$341.

Members of the State House of Representatives and employees are under the same health insurance, and also contribute 20 percent of the cost. They can also participate in a health savings account. State reps and their staff pay \$109 per month for a single person, \$254 for a couple and \$328 for family coverage, for plan, "Community Blue PPO #1."

Fred Wright, benefits representative for UAW

Local 598, said that GM UAW employees do not have a monthly premium. "Entry-level" employees will pay approximately \$1,000 in deductibles as they use the benefits. Long-time employees have to contribute to health benefits.

Retired UAW employees who opt for coverage will pay either \$17 for a single person out of their pension check, or \$34 for a family.

“We are constantly looking at our options in an effort to control costs and still provide a quality plan.”

Renee Wilson
Clerk, city of Fenton



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Firearm sales at all-time high

►CPL classes a must for those who want to carry concealed

By Yvonne Stegall

ystegall@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

According to FBI reports, Black Friday this year set an all-time record high for firearm sales. There were 175,000 background checks conducted on Nov. 28, throughout the U.S. The entire month saw a boom in sales, and the FBI ran nearly two million background checks throughout the month.

While Christmas is part of the upswing in gun sales, with many people buying their child's first gun for hunting or their own new rifle, gifting and the holidays isn't the only reason sales have risen.

According to one NBC affiliate station, studies show that when people are afraid, 'gun veterans' as well as new users, will stock up. With the nation's fear after seeing the violent riots in Ferguson, Missouri, increased sales were a likely response.

Most gun advocates will tell you that even in an open carry state like Michigan you need to get your concealed pistol license (CPL). Concealing your weapon allows you to not put fear in people you are around and it also allows you to not show the "bad" guy that you are armed.

Upon completion of the approved course, a certificate will be issued and the student will take that and two passport photos to the county clerk's office in the county they reside. There, they will have a quick fingerprint and background check for disqualifying felonies. Several weeks later, the applicant will either be told to come back to the clerk's office to pick up their license or it will be mailed to them. The application fee is \$125.

While there are a few options out there for CPL classes, locally and throughout Genesee County, Personal Defense Services offers a local solution.

Brett Selby has been a police officer



CPL class basics

- **Take a National Rifle Association (NRA) approved Personal Protection** in the Home course with a certified instructor.
- **The course is** a one-day class that should include an in-depth program regarding individuals' responsibilities of using and storing a firearm in the home.
- **The second part** of the course should include an extensive legal brief by a law enforcement officer or attorney who has advanced training in personal protection and gun law knowledge.
- **The third part** would include a comprehensive test of the material.
- **Quality on the range** with at least 30 rounds of ammunition.

Source: Lt. Brett Selby of Personal Defense Service LLC

for 23 years and is currently a police lieutenant and shift commander in the patrol division. He has been teaching CPL classes for the past 10 years and a firearms

instructor at The Oakland Police Academy. "I accept only small classes to give individual attention and never turn a student away for their skill level," said Selby.

In Genesee County, there's a one-in-13 chance a person has a concealed weapon permit.

According to data compiled from police reports and U.S. Census estimates, 7.75 out of every 100 adults in Genesee County who are eligible

to carry a concealed pistol have a CPL. This is in contrast to stats showing that statewide, one in 16 adults has a CPL.

Summary

►Gun sales have gone up over the past month, due to holidays and national violence.

“Decide whether or not you are going to be a victim. It's better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it.”

Kevin Stegall
Fenton resident and recent CPL class student

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TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

Assistant City Manager Mike Burns discusses the general timeline for the Streetscape project on Wednesday night.

STREETSCAPE

Continued from Front Page

will become when the streetscape project is complete — slated to begin in the spring.

There's a reason the story sounds familiar. It's because the city essentially held the same meeting last November. But last year, the project was fated to not begin as planned, and was mostly delayed for another year.

"I can assure you, that this project is going to go this spring," said Assistant City Manager Mike Burns to the group of about 30, who poured over conceptual print-outs of where the new trees will go.

The Streetscape project has been delayed for two years, once intentionally to secure \$1.7 million in federal grants, and another time (this year) as the shut-down in the federal government delayed processing by the Federal Highway Administration in time to keep construction into one season.

The project will be paid for with bonds, the first payment being sent out next year. Burns said the city also locked in a lower interest rate, saving \$140,000 over the life of the 20-year bond.

Business owners were treated to a digital video rendering showing what the trees downtown will look like, prompting some concerns over blocked storefronts and messy falling leaves. Landscape Architect Vanessa Warren with OHM Advisors, Inc. answered concerns and explained the different species.

The group also talked about snow removal, sidewalk drainage, and how traffic volume will stay the same, but be slowed as downtown becomes more

pedestrian friendly.

The plans Burns laid out were similar to last year, and many of the very specific details and the exact timeline will be fleshed out over the winter, with a final detailed meeting in the spring before ground is broken.

The heavy-duty work is expected to begin in late March, weather permitting, and end in the late fall. Some work will have to be completed spring 2016, but most will be done in 2015.

Burns did offer some traffic insights while a new storm sewer is put in.

During the bulk of the project, South LeRoy Street will be one northbound lane only. Shiawassee Avenue near downtown will only be eastbound. All other roads will be open as usual, and

Mill Street will be two-way once again.

Streetscape basics

The project has been in the works since 2011, when conceptual drawings were made. When completed, the streetscape will alter the streets, curbs, sidewalks and lighting of the downtown, from Second Street to Elizabeth Street.

The \$4.8 million project was first delayed in 2012, when the city decided to wait for \$1.7 in federal funds.

In the fall of 2013, City Manager Lynn Markland and Assistant City Manager Mike Burns submitted paperwork for the grants with the expectation of it all being wrapped up that winter, and allowing bidding and construction to begin. The October 2013 federal government shut-down and MDOT caused delays in the obligating of the funds. Now, funds have been secured and construction can begin in spring 2015.

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TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

Landscape Architect and horticulturalist Vanessa Warren with OHM Advisors, Inc. explains what trees would be used, as planted in the latter phase of the Streetscape project. Business owners express concerns over trees possibly crowding their storefronts.

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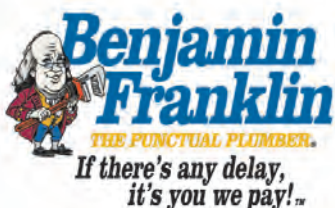
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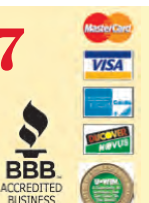
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To adopt any of these pets, please call Adopt-A-Pet at our Fenton location 810-629-0723.

**Garfield**

I'm a happy kitten, who would do well in any home. Perhaps you would consider adopting my sister, Lace, too?

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**Harry**

Harry is a hound, through and through Coonhound.

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**Lace**

I'm a happy kitten, who would do well in any home. Perhaps you would consider adopting my brother, Garfield, too?

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**Macho Man**

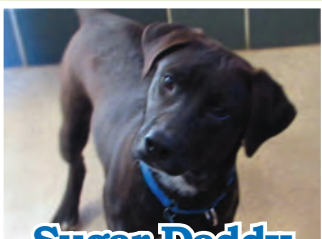
I'm a playful little, nine month old boy.

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**Carrington**

I'm a beautiful golden brown tabby. I need a home that will let me build my confidence.

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**Sugar Daddy**

I'm a six month Lab learning what being a pup is all about.

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**Ernie**

I'm a sweet baby boy, who loves to play with my brother Bert. Two kittens are twice as nice!

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**Annie**

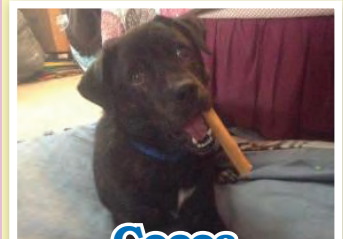
Six month old Annie just keeps getting overlooked.

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**Bert**

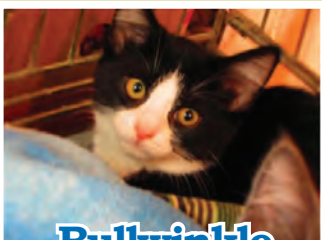
I'm a sweet baby boy, who loves to play with my brother Ernie. Two kittens are twice as nice!

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**Cocoa**

This boxer blend is a true catch!

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**Bullwinkle**

I'm a shy guy who would love to have access to lots of toys and daily playtime.

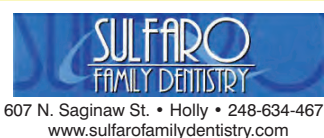
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**Dee Dee**

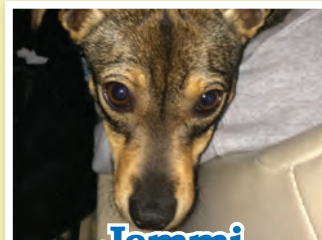
I'm a gorgeous senior girl.

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**Parsnip**

I was raised around dogs, cat, and birds. And I like humans of all shapes and sizes!

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**Jammi**

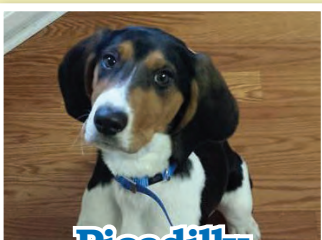
Happy go lucky Jammi is under a year and only 10 lbs.

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**Saunter**

I was born at AAP. I'm the last of my littermates. Will you be my fur-ever home?

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**Picadilly**

Picadilly is a young 5 month old Coonhound.

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**Mamasan**

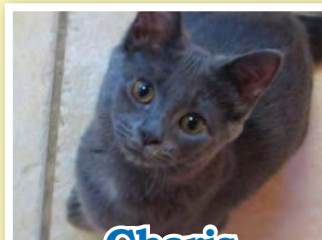
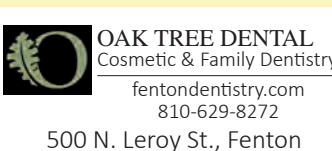
I'm a beautiful girl, who is under three. I want a home for the holidays.

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**Veronica**

Veronica is a special needs Shih Tzu with so much love to give.

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**Charis**

I'm 6 months old and just the sweetest girl. I love attention and I'm very affectionate.

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**Batman**

I'm a tiny boy who needs a quiet home with someone home a lot.

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All my babies have been adopted... Now I'm ready to be adopted and babied.

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Milo

I'm a shy little guy who needs a calm home.

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Miranda

I'm painfully shy and need someone with lots of patience, to help me bloom into the wonderful cat I know I can be!

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Bell Title

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810-208-8970



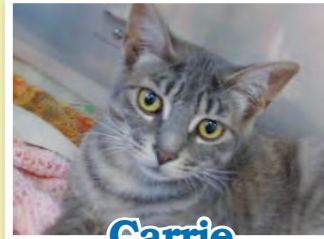
Fiona

I'm always full of smiles as long as my people are near.

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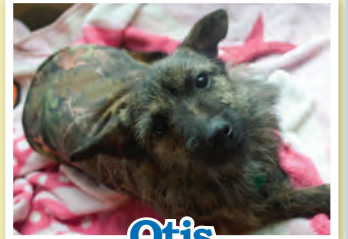
Carrie

I'm a sweet, affectionate girl, who has a condition that makes me wiggle when I walk.

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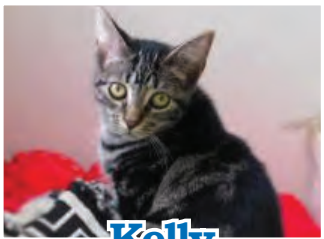


Otis

Otis is a shy little guy at first but a love bug in no time.

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Kelly

I'm shy and a bit nervous, but when I trust you, I become all snuggles and love.

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Hank

I'm a BIG boy who needs to be the only animal in the home.

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Mama Kat

I always look like I'm winking, because I only have one eye. I'm very petite and sweet!

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Pop Rocks

I'm a six month Lab blend just looking for love.

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Smiley

I'm a gorgeous girl with a personality to match! Will I be yours fur-ever?

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Boppity

Boppity is a six month old Shepherd/Lab girl ready to start her life.

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Homer

I'm a big guy, with a big heart. I want to spend the holidays with you - in my new home.

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Donny

I'm about 2 years old and a typical Lab.

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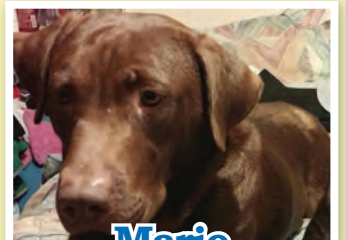


Amethyst

I'm a bit shy, but I love people. Adopt me - you won't be disappointed!

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Marie

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Deanna

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Emmy

I love to play and need someone experienced with training.

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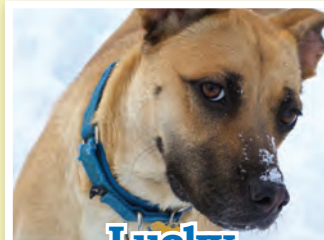


CJ

I have a very strong personality. If you are an experienced cat owner, I'm your girl!

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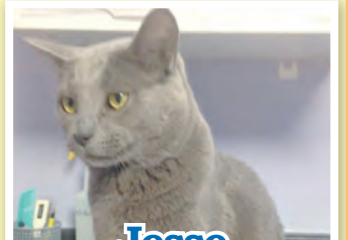


Lucky

Lucky has been with us for a long time and needs someone to give her a chance.

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Jesse

I'm particular about my feline friends. I would do best if I was an only child.

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inBusiness

By Sally Rummel • news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

Belle Jackson Therapeutic Massage

Local massage therapist moves to new office

Belle Jackson, BCTM, LMT, has moved her massage therapy practice to 14165 North Fenton Rd., Suite 104 in the North Towne Professional Center in Fenton Township.

A certified massage therapist since 2006, Jackson's new location brings her patients a more relaxed setting in a larger space, plus convenient parking. She has been in private practice since May 2013.

Jackson has created a unique niche in her practice by focusing on Myofascial Release to target chronic pain. She also performs cranial sacral massage, wellness lymphatic work and relaxation massage.

"Massage therapy is now thought to be one of the principal components in maintaining good health," she said. "It's also helpful for injuries. If you've been injured in an auto accident, you can now get massage therapy with a doctor's prescription,



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SALLY RUMMEL

Massage Therapist Belle Jackson shows her larger, more private space at her new office in the North Towne Professional Center in Fenton Township.

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PRICES

Continued from Front Page

Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) claimed its members will keep oil production at current levels. Many industry experts expected the cartel to slash production amid a deep slide in oil prices, which hit five-year lows following the announcement.

Smith said that he has heard and read that the lower prices are due to having so much oil in reserves and the demand is lower. "Now that the summer travel period is over it's dropping in price," he said.

Even the current drops are enough to ease the cost of travel for Christmas shopping, giving us more money to spend on gifts instead of on our gas tanks.

According to reports by Fox News, about 12 percent of U.S. gas stations are already charging less than \$2.50 a gallon. It is believed that more than a third of sta-

tions will be under \$2.50 by Christmas.

According to Gas News, the average retail gasoline prices in Flint have risen 9.5 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$2.87/g on Wednesday. These calculations are according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 212 gas outlets in Flint.

This compares with the national average that has fallen 2.1 cents per gallon in the last week to \$2.78/g.

Not only are prices dropping, prices Wednesday were 34.6 cents per gallon lower than the same day one year ago and are 3.8 cents per gallon lower than a month ago, in Flint. The national average has decreased 21.8

cents per gallon during the last month and stands 49.9 cents per gallon lower than this day one year ago.

Smith said, "It's a good possibility gas prices will be down to \$2 or less by Christmas, especially if it keeps going the way it has been."

“It's a good possibility gas prices will be down to \$2 or less by Christmas...”

Doug Smith
Smitty's Exit 80 owner



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | FILE PHOTO

People just might be smiling more at the pump this month as gasoline prices continue to drop.

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News briefs

FERC scoping meeting for pipeline

On Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 6 p.m., the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will host a scoping meeting at the Holiday Inn Gateway Center at 5353 Gateway Centre in Flint. At this meeting, FERC will discuss the environmental impacts of the planned ET Rover pipeline project that is proposed to come through multiple counties in Michigan, including Genesee, Livingston and Oakland County. According to a release sent by FERC, representatives from Rover will be present one hour prior to the meeting to answer questions. More information can be found at ferc.gov.

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Decorating downtown Linden



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SUBMITTED PHOTO
The Linden Kiwanis have again put up Christmas decorations in Linden. The group has been funding and doing this project for more than 30 years. For years, Kiwanis member Bob Sansam donated his time and equipment to put up the decorations. This year, Ronald's Tree Service volunteered its time and trucks to get the job done.

SCHOOL BUSES

Continued from Front Page

have to be taken out of service and be fixed immediately.

Followed by six of 16 buses red flagged for Lake Fenton Community Schools, and one in Holly Area Schools.

A yellow tag bus can remain in service, but the items in question must be repaired within 60 days of the inspection.

Fenton Superintendent Tim Jalkanen said, "Each year the Michigan State Police inspect school buses across the state. Fenton schools has two full-time mechanics to maintain the fleet of 44 buses of Fenton schools and the Genesee Intermediate School District."

Of the 20 buses that were red flagged at his school, Jalkanen said, "Several of the red tags on our buses were related to the seats. For example, the foam on seats needed to be replaced or a seat bolt broke during the inspection."

"All of the red tag items were repaired

"All of the red tag items were repaired and buses were back in service while the Michigan State Police officer was still in the district."

Tim Jalkanen
Fenton Superintendent

and buses were back in service while the Michigan State Police officer was still in the district. We strive to make sure our buses are safe at all times."

Looking back at the end of 2013 reports, Fenton had one of 27 buses red tagged, and no yellow. On that same report, of 28 buses in Linden, three had a yellow grade and four had red. This report's statistics indicate that the high rates this year aren't a regular occurrence.

Jalkanen said, "We know our buses are old and in need of replacement. The average age of our bus fleet is 14 years old. We are planning to purchase 17 new buses in the coming years through the passage of the recent

bond proposal. In fact, four new buses are in the district today (Tuesday) and will be on the road very soon."

Lake Fenton Superintendent Wayne Wright, said, "Our busses are inspected regularly by our mechanics, and our drivers go through a pre-check inspection before driving the buses every day. I believe our buses are very safe."

Wright too said many of the red flags were due to seat foam issues, which is a new addition to the inspection list this year.

According to Michigan.gov, the annual report for all of Michigan's schools is posted on the government site each year after September 1.

Calendar of events

'ALIVE IN APPALACHIA' PREMIERS ON DEC. 10

The Fenton Film Series invites the community to its next 'free' movie night on Wednesday, Dec. 10 for the world premiere of "Alive in Appalachia," the newest documentary from Tim Jagielo, a local filmmaker and associate editor at the Tri-County Times. The movie starts at 7 p.m. at the Fenton Community & Cultural Center. Come early to meet the filmmaker and enjoy complimentary food and entertainment. As always, admission is free. Celebrate the holidays with this film about charity and the human spirit. Movies are presented free of charge thanks to the generous donations from several local sponsors. Fun before the film continues with two free-to-enter raffles — for a "Historic Fenton" comforter donated by Ralph Rheingans, and a holiday flower arrangement provided by Tanglewood Home Care.

COOKIES FOR LOVED ONES IN THE MILITARY OVERSEAS

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inBusiness

By Sally Rummel • news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

What's Shake'n
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Bigger! Better! Fresher is their motto

The burger is “what’s make’n” news at What’s Shake’n, Fenton’s newest hamburger eatery.

“Every single burger is made to order,” said Dave Durant, who opened the restaurant June 18 with partners Jerry Heck and Jeff Rak. Together, they’ve stacked up 105 years in the burger and ice cream industry.

To get the best burger, What’s Shake’n starts with the freshest beef from Abbott’s Meats, always fresh and never frozen. Each burger is topped with local hand-cut vegetables and condiments for its signature style, and then “sandwiched” in between a soft, tender potato bun. For a sumptuous side dish, each burger is accompanied by house-made chips, unless fries, onion rings or other sides are requested.

“Our three most popular burgers are the Shake’n Classic, the Smokehouse Bacon Cheeseburger and the Shake’n ‘O’ (Olive) Burger,” said Heck, who heads day-to-day operations.

Uncle Ray’s hand-spun soft serve ice cream is “the cherry on top of the sundae” after a delicious burger meal, or as a treat on its own. “You can enjoy Uncle Ray’s most popular ice cream treats — from shakes to sundaes, turbo blasts and frozen chills right at this convenient Silver Parkway location,”



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SALLY RUMMEL

What's Shake'n partners Dave Durant (left) and Jerry Heck each take a huge bite from a 1/3-pound burger, while employee Mackenzie Winter shows off a real Uncle Ray's strawberry shake topped with whipped cream and a cherry.

said Durant, owner of the original Uncle Ray's Dairyland on North LeRoy. “We do everything at What’s Shake’n the ‘Uncle Ray Way,’ creating an experience of fun, beyond the food.”

A drive-through is also available, with burgers and treats hand delivered to your car.

What’s Shake’n is located at 15155 Silver Parkway in Fenton, telephone (810) 354-8350.



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FLEXING LIONS

Kickoff time has changed for Lions' Dec. 14 game against the Vikings.
See Page 18A



Did You Know?

► The last time the Detroit Lions hosted a playoff game was on Jan. 8, 1994 (vs. Green Bay).

TRIVIA BASEBALL

Q Who has been MLB's youngest manager to start a season since 1900?

A The Cleveland Indians hired Lou Boudreau as their manager on Nov. 25, 1941. He was 24.

DAVID'S DABBLINGS

Last weekend was a good one for me in terms of college football. About a week ago, I made a quick comment about how the Southeastern Conference (SEC) was overrated. Conventional wisdom has also suggested the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) is an inferior football league, meaning Florida State isn't a worthy No. 1 because of the poor opposition they face in the ACC.

Look at what happened Thanksgiving weekend though. The ACC and SEC faced off in four games during that period. Guess who won all four games? The ACC teams did.

Now I'm not a Florida State fan at all. In fact, I typically root against them. However, arguing they don't deserve to be No. 1 because they are in the ACC makes little sense. And while I'm at it, neither does penalizing an undefeated team for 'barely winning' games. There is no way the Seminoles should be No. 4 in the most recent college playoff poll. The Seminoles, and the ACC, proved they are a legit conference, and certainly on par with the overrated SEC.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SCOTT SCHUPBACH
Metro League Griffin (left) Connor Phillips (left) battles for the puck.

Griffins humbled by Davison

► Squad shows improvement but loses 8-0 to Cardinals

By David Troppens
dtroppens@tctimes.com

Hartland—It's called the ever popular "eye test."

For most of the first period, the Metro League Griffins (a co-op varsity hockey squad of players from Fen-

ton and Linden schools) passed that eye test against the Davison Cardinals at Hartland Sports Center on Wednesday night.

In fact, for about the first seven minutes, the Griffins looked dominant, taking five of the game's first six shots and keeping the puck in Davison's defensive zone most of that time.

However, games are not won through the "eye test."

Despite playing well for the first 16 minutes of the first period, the Griffins had two moments in the first 17 minutes where they allowed two goals within seconds of each other, resulting in a 4-0 first-period deficit. After that first period, the

See GRIFFINS on 19A



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | MARK BOLEN

Holly's Paige Reid (center) scored six points in the Bronchos' 37-32 victory against Hartland.

Bronchos still winning

► Third quarter leads Holly to 25th straight regular-season win

By David Troppens

dtroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6789

Hartland—The Holly varsity girls basketball team led 14-12 on the road at Hartland

High School in its first game of the 2013-14 regular season.

But the start of the second half didn't go all too well. The Bronchos saw each of their first five possessions of the quarter end in turnovers, while Hartland surged to an 18-14 lead after Hartland's

Lexey Tobel converted two free throws right after Holly had called a time out.

Whatever was said by Holly coach David Hall during the time out worked. After those converted Hartland free throws, the Bronchos, led by
See BRONCHOS on 20A



TRI-COUNTY TIMES
SETH NORMINGTON

The Linden girls cross country team captured a regional title and the No. 3 spot on our Tri-County Fall Top 10 Poll.

XC teams dominate our Top 10

► Three Linden squads among our final four

By David Troppens
dtroppens@tctimes.com

Here's a question we ask here a lot — exactly what sport is the tri-county area a hotbed for?

There are areas that seem to produce strong football teams, basketball squads, or baseball and softball programs. Prep fans love to debate stuff like this. So what is that sport in our tiny area?

Anyone who has followed these columns over the last five years should be able to figure out
See TOP 10 on 20A



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Have tickets for the Vikings-Lions game?

►NFL's flex scheduling has moved game to 4:25 p.m.

By David Troppens

dtroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6789

For those Detroit Lions' fans who are holding a ticket to Detroit's home game against the Minnesota Vikings on Dec. 14, you may want to disregard the 1 p.m. kickoff time your ticket states.

That's because the game has become a victim of the National Football League's flex scheduling program. The game's kickoff at Ford Field is now scheduled for 4:25 p.m. instead.

Flex scheduling begins each Sunday during the fifth week of the NFL season and continues through the final regular season week. The goal of flex scheduling, or changing the time of a Sunday contest to a different time on that same date, is done for a variety of reasons. The primary goal is to get some of the the most desired contests on Sundays scheduled with the largest prime time audience. In most cases that would involve moving to NBC's Sunday Night contest.

However, with the Vikings at Lions' game this wasn't the reason it was moved. First off, the game was moved from 1 p.m. until 4:15 p.m., the same time that FOX Sports has the San Francisco 49ers at Seattle

Flex Scheduling 101

Here's a few tips and rules about the NFL's policy of flex scheduling.

1) The NFL is allowed to move Sunday afternoon games to either create a desirable matchup on Sunday night, or to balance the games covered by FOX and CBS on any given Sunday afternoon.

2) The NFL will make their decisions 12 days in advance (six days in advance for Week #17) on what game(s) will be flexed.

3) There's a good chance the Lions last game of the season against Green Bay (1 p.m. kickoff) will be flexed to the Sunday night game, moving the kickoff to 8:15 p.m.

Seahawks game slated. Chances are, most of the nation will get that game during FOX's Sunday 1 p.m./4 p.m. doubleheader of NFL games.

Contests are also flexed between CBS and FOX in order to assure both teams get a proper balance of games to broadcast each Sunday afternoon. Initially, CBS had eight games scheduled on the AFC package of contests, while FOX had just five with NFL teams. To balance the schedules, FOX was given the Cincinnati Bengals at Cleveland Browns game to change

the differential to 7-6. The Bengals and Browns are scheduled for 1 p.m., so the Lions' home game was moved to 4:15 p.m. With the Bengals and Browns in the thick of the AFC playoff race, and with Cleveland's high-profile rookie quarterback Johnny Manziel pushing current starter Brian Hoyer for the starting position, chances are FOX's national game at 1 p.m. will be the Bengals and Browns. It made sense to move the Vikings and Lions to 4:15 p.m. to enhance the viewership of the 1 p.m. contest while giving FOX a second game for the 4:15 p.m. slot.

There has been talk about flexing other Lions' games. It was thought the Lions' Week #12 matchup with the New England Patriots would be flexed to the Sunday Night game. It wasn't. And don't be shocked if the Lions' trip to Green Bay on Dec. 28 is eventually flexed to the Sunday night (8:25 p.m.) contest since there's a good chance the game could determine the winner of the NFC Central Division. Currently, the game is scheduled for 1 p.m.

During most NFL weeks, games which have their game times changed will be done 12 days in advance. However, during Week #17 (the final week of the regular season) changes can be made with as little as six days notice. So the decision on that game won't be made until Dec. 22.



If you have tickets to the Lions' game against the Minnesota Vikings on Dec. 14, you will want to take note kickoff has been switched to 4:25 p.m. from 1 p.m. because of the NFL's flex schedule policy.

Blue Devils' offense looks strong vs. Atherton, 62-28

By David Troppens

dtroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6789

Lake Fenton's first-year varsity girls basketball coach Brian VanBuren said he thought he may see great improvement from the first game to his team's second contest of the season.

He was right. The Blue Devils played a complete 32 minutes against Atherton, earning a 62-28 victory on Thursday night.

"We played well. We rebounded, shared the ball and were in the right spots defensively. We seemed to be a step slow on Monday and maybe it was the development from Monday to this game. A lot of time from the first game to the second game you see great improvement."

Sophomore Sierra Arroyo helped set the tone for the Blue Devils, beginning the game with two three-pointers. She

ended up finishing with five three and a team-high 19 points.

Lake Fenton (1-1) won every quarter, taking an 11-8 lead after one period and a 27-16 lead into halftime. Perhaps one of the most satisfying portions of the game was when the Blue Devils' bench, sparked by freshman Cameron Williams, came out for about the final five minutes of the game and helped spark a 24-2 fourth-quarter Blue Devils' edge in scoring.

"Cameron came in, got some great shots right away and settled them down," VanBuren said. "As soon as she got on the floor, she asked me what play I wanted to call and I told her to run what she wanted and to not let it turn ugly. First time down the court she hit a three, the second time she hit a three ... and she had eight points in a matter of a minute. The bench was just a continuation of the game. They moved the ball



TRI-COUNTY TIMES! MARK BOLEN

Lake Fenton's Sierra Arroyo scored a team-high 19 points in the Blue Devils' 62-28 victory vs. Atherton on Thursday.

around well and made great shots."

Autumn Beardsley had 10 points, nine rebounds, three blocks and three steals while Williams finished with eight points. Kaitlyn Begley led the squad with three assists and also had three steals.

Lake Fenton travels to Holly for a tough road game on Tuesday.

Howell 46, Fenton 33

The Tigers were outscored 11-2 in the opening quarter, eventually resulting in a 46-33 road loss to the Highlanders.

The Tigers actually struggled during the first half, trailing 29-14 at the half. However, Fenton played a stronger final 16 minutes and won the second half by a 19-17 margin.

See DEVILS on 19A

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Slow start costs Eagles versus Brighton, 63-38

►Linden's Smith scores at least 20 for second straight game

By David Troppens

dtroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6789

There were a lot of strikes going against the Linden varsity girls basketball team as the squad faced Brighton, a school over 2,000 students.

The Eagles were given another strike after opening the game by being outscored 13-0 in the opening quarter.

However, the Eagles were able to play better after that first quarter and remain competitive with the Bulldogs most of the rest of the game before falling 63-38 in the road contest on Wednesday.

Linden's offense was much better the rest of the game, scoring double-digits in each of the final three periods, including outscoring Brighton 16-15 in the second quarter.

"The first quarter killed us," Linden coach Ben Varner said. "It wasn't like we didn't get shots. We were 0-for-16 from the field and they were good shots. Most were inside the paint. We had some layups. We had some open jumpers but no threes. They blocked a few shots. They are extremely big and very good, but we were getting good shots and just couldn't score. ... Once we finally made our first basket, we kind of got it going from there."

The Eagles cut the deficit to 10 at one time, but usually trailed by about 16. Brighton blew the game open in the final minutes.



Linden's Taylor Smith

Photo by Mark Bolen

Taylor Smith continued her strong start to the season, scoring a game-high 23 points. Smith, a Linden junior, scored 20 points in the Eagles' 65-31 victory at Lake Fenton. She also had four steals against Brighton.

"She's doing a really good job for us, through two games anyway," Varner said. "It's going to get tougher because people are going to be scouting her, but so far she's handled it very well. She's doing a good job not just having the ball but off the ball, getting off screens and getting the ball to her. She is going to have to be patient and mentally tough knowing what's going to be coming (when teams defend her in the future). So far she's handling it well."

Sterling DeGayner scored seven points and had four steals, while Megan Kenney had six points and six rebounds. Brighton's post player Cori Croker led the Bulldogs with 21 points.

"We are getting better and we got better against Brighton," Varner said.

"Some parents came up to me and told me we played better against Brighton than we did in our win against Lake Fenton on Monday. I kind of agree with them. We didn't score as much, but we battled back and played hard against a good team. We will battle and are going to play hard every night. If we continue to do that, we can do some things."

had five rebounds. Emma Brant followed Evo with seven points and three steals, while Katie Conroy scored six points, all coming from behind the three-point arc. Madison Shegos netted five points, while Maddie Carr paced the Tigers with three assists. Howell's Erin Habala led all scorers with 16 points.

Fenton returned to action on Friday against Hartland. They play Holly this Friday at home at 6 p.m.

DEVILS

Continued from Page 18A

"We started a little slow but picked up our intensity as the game went on," Fenton coach Becki Moore said. "However, it was the first varsity game for a lot of kids and they never gave up. They kept righting throughout the whole game."

Seven Tigers scored at least two points, led by Emma Evo's eight points. Evo also



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SCOTT SCHUPBACH

Metro League Griffin player Brendan Buerkel (center) is taken to the ice while trying to score a goal in the Griffins' 8-0 loss to the Davison Cardinals on Wednesday.

GRIFFINS

Continued from Page 17A

Cardinals dominated based on the "eye test" and on the scoreboard resulting in an 8-0 loss for the Griffins.

"We started out well. Our power play was pretty strong," Griffins forward and captain Connor Phillips said. "We had some decent opportunities. We have to pick up defensively — watch their wingers in front of the net. They had us beat in front of the net. We just have to work harder in practice."

"We have a lot of potential. That's the big thing. We just have to come together as a team."

"It came down to conditioning," the Griffins' first-year coach Will Dawson said. "I think our team got a little tired and relaxed a little. That's all it takes for two quick goals."

"(At the start of the first period) we did a great job of forechecking, we had a lot of pressure and got a few shots. We were beating them in shots until our first penalty."

The Cardinals really didn't dominate any aspect of the game until their first goal with 9:40 left in the opening period. It was followed by another goal just 11 seconds later. And despite the Griffins' domination of the first seven minutes of the contest, they were trailing 2-0.

It didn't seem to hurt the Metro League squad for the rest of the period. The Griffins continued to play solid hockey for the rest of the period — at least until the final

minute. That's when Davison scored two more goals during the final 60 seconds. One came with 54 seconds left, and the other with just four seconds left. Suddenly, what seemed to be a pretty strong period of play for the Griffins became a 4-0 deficit at the first intermission.

In the second period Davison was clearly the stronger squad, this time outscoring the Griffins 3-0 in the 17-minute session. The Griffins entered the third period down 7-0 and one goal away from being mercied.

The Griffins had one good chance to score in the third period on a breakaway by Phillips, but the shot was saved. The Cardinals ended the game with 12:48 left in the third period.

"We just have to keep on going," Dawson said. "We have to learn how to play through adversity even though we are down. I think (the two late first-period) goals got us down a bit on our confidence."

It appears the Griffins could be a better product than in recent seasons. The numbers are clearly higher. The bench included 16 players. In past years numbers were sometimes more around 10 than 16.

"It's pretty nice having a decent-sized bench," Phillips said. "In the past we've had rough numbers. This year we have a lot more kids. We have a lot more freshmen and sophomores who will eventually get there and help us out. That's nice."

The Griffins (1-3) return to action Wednesday against the Alliance at the Polar Palace at 7:15 p.m.

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BRONCHOS

Continued from Page 17A

Kaitlyn Smith took control. With Smith scoring 11 of the points, the Bronchos capped the third quarter with a 16-2 run, resulting in a 30-20 lead entering the fourth. From there, Holly held on to capture their 25th straight regular season victory, defeating Hartland 37-32 on Tuesday night.

Holly hasn't lost a regular season contest since Feb. 5, 2013 when the Bronchos lost a 48-26 verdict at Clio.

"We knew we were going to be pushed and we wanted to come out and win really bad," said Smith. "A lot of people doubt us because we are losing a couple of big girls from last year. We want to come out and win so bad, and want this year to be a really good year for us."

It ended up being a pretty good start because of Smith's third quarter. After the two free throws by Hartland, the Bronchos settled down and scored points on each of their next three possessions. Smith started the run with a three-pointer, cutting Hartland's lead to 18-17. After a Hartland turnover, Smith followed with a driving hoop, giving Holly a 19-18 lead. Hartland bounced back with a hoop by Graysen Cockerham, but then Brooke Jackman followed with a three-pointer, and Holly bounced ahead 22-20. The bucket started a string of 11 straight Bronchos' points. A Paige Reid layup was followed by consecutive three-pointers by Smith, establishing Holly's 30-20 lead.

"Early in that quarter we had to call time out. We came out three straight times and we tried to go one-on-one," Holly coach David Hall said. "We called time out and said, 'We need each other. Let's use each other to make the job a little bit easier.' ... We got a couple of baskets and Kaitlyn hits that (three-point) play."

In the fourth, Hartland cut the gap to as close as 34-31



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | MARK BOLEN
Holly's Kaitlyn Smith (left) drives to the basket in the Bronchos' victory against Hartland on Tuesday.

with 1:11 remaining on two free throws by Cockerham, but Smith helped ice the contest by netting three-of-four free throws during two of Holly's last three possessions of the contest.

During last season's 20-0 regular season, the Bronchos opened with a 44-39 victory at home against the Hartland Eagles, a traditional strong squad from the Kensington Lakes Activities Association. This year's victory at Hartland's home could symbolically represent that the Bronchos can expect another fine regular season.

"It builds our confidence knowing we came out here with a win and knowing we were able to come out of their gym with a victory," Holly senior Brooke Jackman said. "This is a good prediction of what is going to happen the rest of the year, so I'm excited."

One area of concern was rebounding. Holly didn't have a first-half offensive rebound, while the Eagles had 11 in the opening 16 minutes. Smith had four steals, four rebounds and two assists to go with her 18 points. Jackman had nine points and a team-high eight boards. Reid collected six points, three rebounds and two assists.

TOP 10

Continued from Page 17A

the answer pretty easily — it's cross country. Cross country runners have dominated the tri-county sports scene for a long time now. And that didn't change this fall.

Last week we revealed squads 10 through six. Here's our top five.

No. 5 - Holly boys tennis:

The addition of Flushing to the Metro League was supposed to add some stronger competition for Holly. The Raiders did that, but the Bronchos performed against that tougher competition with flying colors, defending their Metro championship. Holly also won a regional crown and made another trip to the D2 state meet. However, once there, the Bronchos finished in a tie for 14th, scoring just two points. So, once again the performance perpetuated that while the Bronchos are the elite team in this region, it's an extremely weak region. So it's really hard to place the Bronchos any higher than this despite their league and regional dominance.

No. 4 - Linden boys cross country:

Perhaps the toughest team to place in this fall's poll. For most of the regular season, the traditionally strong and respected program was completely off the radar, finishing in third place in the Metro. The Eagles were a bit fortunate to get to the state meet as well, placing third just four points into a state meet spot.

However, once at the state meet, the Eagles proved why Linden boys cross country remains one of the area's top programs, placing seventh at the state meet. No fall program had a better state tournament performance in any sport than the Eagles, and that's what people remember the most 10 years later.

No. 3 - Linden girls cross country:

The addition of Flushing to the Metro put an end to Linden's two-year run atop the league, but the Eagles were still a very strong No. 2 squad. The girls also showed their strength during the re-



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SUBMITTED PHOTO

Holly's varsity boys cross country team is our No. 1 team in our Tri-County Top 10 Fall Poll. It was a tough choice between the Bronchos and Linden boys soccer at the top of our poll.

gional meet, capturing the title by a whopping 41 points. The Eagles capped the season by placing 10th (out of 28 teams) at the state meet.

No. 2 - Linden boys soccer:

The battle for No. 1 was a challenging one. The Linden boys soccer team lost of a large chunk of last year's Metro League championship squad which spent some of the season ranked No. 1 in Division 2. However, the Eagles also returned some of the best players from last year's squad. So while many thought they'd be good, just how good remained a question.

It turned out the Eagles were very good, and maybe better than they were a year ago. Linden opened the season 11-0-1. The Eagles defended their Metro League championship, won a district crown and advanced to the regional finals before losing to Cranbrook Kingswood 3-1. Linden finished with a 20-2-1 overall mark, and could've

easily been ranked No. 1 in this poll.

No. 1 - Holly boys cross country:

The Bronchos were expected to have a big season, and they did. During the regular season, Holly won its division of the Holly Invitational and the Kayla O'Mara Invitational. The Bronchos also dominated Metro foes, taking first in all three jamborees, and easily cruising to their second straight league crown. Of course, to win that title, Holly beat two Division 2 ranked schools (Clio and Linden) three times as well. The Bronchos began the postseason with a regional championship as well. If there was one downer to the season, it may have been finishing 11th out of 27 teams at the D1 state meet. Still, that's the best Holly has done in ages at the state meet. And it was good enough to earn our honor as the fall's top team.

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Meet Kevin Tyler

- Renaissance Festival performer
- Father
- Dual Irish/U.S. citizen

By Tim Jagielo

tjagielo@tctimes.com; 810-433-6795

Kevin Tyler with the stage name of *Conor Savage* performs as an acoustic rock/folk performer. He does about 100 shows per year, and also performs at virtual venues in *Second Life*, where he has generated a following. A retired GM electrician, he performs alone, and with a band. He's sent his music all over the world, receiving applause from the cultures he's paid homage to with his music.

How do crowds react to you at the Renaissance Festival?

They love it. Most of the time, they really enjoy what we're doing. That's the best for me. That's really why I do it.

Do you get feedback from people from Ireland?

Yes. I posted an old Scottish tune, on YouTube, in Gaelic. I got a lot of really nice comments from Scottish singers in Scotland. People in Scotland, Ireland and England have given me some really nice comments, and that means more to me than anything, because they don't want to hear Americans doing Irish songs. They're sick of it. They're sick of Americans going over there and singing 'Danny Boy,' terribly, because we do!

How did you get started in music?

My mother (and I barely remember this) is from Ireland. She's from Belfast, and she was asked to supply some entertainment for this party, and she decided I was gonna get up and sing it and I was 5 years old. She put me up on stage, and I had to sing this old Irish 'Come all ye' song. I was so scared I couldn't see because my eyes were all teared up from fear. I blundered through it and all I can remember was 200 women all saying, 'Aww, isn't he cute.'

I started on the bagpipes at 9. Everybody in the family played something. The next thing I know, I'm taking bagpipe lessons. That's really the only music lessons I've had. I've had those, since I was 10 years old, and I'm almost 60 now.

Lots of people have Irish heritage, but aren't into the culture. Why are you into the culture?

Because my mother was from Ireland. It was pretty much a big part of my life from when I was a child. I grew up with an Irish mom. I didn't get interested in modern Ireland, until the



"My daughter. She's the only reason I'm alive."
Kevin Tyler

last 20 years or so. Most of my interest was in the mythology and the ancient history of it.

What do you like about modern Ireland?

I like their spirit. I think it's because it still retains that spirit, people who go there say that they don't want to leave, because it's the most hospitable place on the planet, which is an ancient tradition.

Why did you choose the name Conor Savage?

My mother's maiden name was Savage. She is descended from Sir John Savage. My favorite character of Irish mythology is Conor Mac Nessa. When we started working for the Michigan Renaissance Festival, the entertainment director asked me 'what's your stage name,' and I said 'I don't have a stage name,' and he said 'you gotta have a stage name,' so I said 'Conor Savage.'

What else is big in your life?

My daughter. She's the only reason I'm alive. When my ex-wife left us in 1992, I went into a severe depression and ended up getting into drugs and it almost killed me. My daughter was also going through a depression and was very sick and I thought I'd lost her a couple times. I basically raised her since she was 4, and my mother was a big help. I never thought I'd be a parent. Growing up, I was a hippie kid in the '70s and never saw myself having children. I always thought that was a scary thought. But the day she was born, I couldn't imagine myself as anything else but her dad, and it's been that way ever since. If anyone ever asked me 'what are you?' I'd say, 'I'm Jamie's dad.'

When did things feel like they stabilized for you?

After my mom and dad died in 1999, about 48 hours apart. About a year later, I almost OD'd and I had a dream about her. I woke up and I knew I was never gonna touch it again. It was bad. My mother basically came to me and saved me. I could sit here and ball, thinking about it. To lose both your parents in the same weekend is very hard.

What else should people know about you?

I hope to move to Ireland. I'm a dual citizen with an Irish passport. I moved

TRI-COUNTY TIMES

TIM JAGIELO

Kevin Tyler of Fenton Township performs as *Conor Savage* about 100 times per year, sometimes online at *Second Life*. He's a proud father, and also a recovering drug addict.

to Fenton for the school system for my daughter. Moving to Fenton was also like a fresh start. The drugs really destroyed my finances and nearly destroyed me. I'm still recovering. I'll probably be recovering the rest of my life.



ASK THE mECHANIC

Chris Wilkinson,
Certified Mechanic

Q: I have a 1990 Grand Prix 3.1 (non-turbo). When my engine is started I get this extra loud whistle from the engine. It seems to be around the EGR valve. I thought it was busted so I changed it. I put the new one on and still a whistle. I'm not sure if it is a bad vacuum leak or not, but it seems like that is the only thing that it could be since I've already changed the EGR valve. Could the EGR hose have a leak or PVC? The noise is literally unbearable. I've also noticed that my heat barely comes out of the defrost. It's a light breeze and when switched to vent nothing comes out. Any suggestions or tips would help a lot!! Thanks.- Thomas

A: Thomas, This definitely sounds like a vacuum leak to me and should be an easy find. Try pouring some water over the suspected area while the car is running. When you get to the leak you will notice that the sound changes and you should see it pulling the water in. Do not over do the water because if the vacuum leak is large enough it could pull in too much water and hydro-lock the engine! As far as the heat problem, this could be caused by the vacuum leak as well and fixing one may cure both.

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AT GRONDINS IN FENTON

Dickens Festival roars back — draws national attention

► BBC commissioning a story on Holly's famous festival

By Tim Jagielo

tjagielo@tctimes.com; 810-433-6795

Holly — For an hour last Friday, it seemed as if the whole village descended on downtown Holly, to fill Saginaw Street to almost the light at Maple Street, as lazily falling snow filled the air.

From the stage, Santa Claus raised his arms to the crowd of the more than 1,000 — the most Police Chief Michael Story had seen in one place in Holly since he started there in 2006.

The lighted parade was simple and short, but the Holly High School Marching Band's holiday cacophony seemed to blare in the clear message for Dickens Festival in Holly — the festival is being revived. Amid the activity, decked out in his stage costume, festival committee member George Kullis said, "This committee kicked butt this year. We're putting on a festival."

It's easy to forget, that in February this year, the fate of the festival was in the balance — a vote was made by the

committee to give the festival one more year, after the festival seemed to flounder in the last couple years.

But the festival is back for three weekends this year, and so far, it's a screaming success. Kullis guesses 4,500 came through downtown Holly last weekend, and there is still two more weekends to go.

While sponsorship initially has fallen short of the \$35,000 goal, last weekend's kick off seemed to prompt new donors into giving, as some last-minute advertising was able to be bought.

On Tuesday, Kullis spoke via phone, while trailering back a new wooden farm cart to give hay rides around downtown.

He was more excited about an email he received that morning — the BBC is commissioning a story about Holly's festival, as the longest running Dickens-themed event, running for more than one weekend. Lucinda Anne Dickens Hawksley has been commissioned to write it.

That's "Dickens" as in, the famous

“For what they’ve actually done, we put a festival on that is family friendly. They’re walking the whole town.”

George Kullis
Holly Dickens Festival
Committee member



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

Dan Couchman and son Kole, 3, of Holly, use the interactive activities the Detroit Institute of Art (DIA) mobile platform offers.

writer's great-great granddaughter. "I just think that was huge, for the festival to get that notoriety," said Kullis. He figures they found the festival through the official website.

"We had a plan, we had more people, we had a layout," Kullis said. The committee of approximately 40 worked all year building the stages, signage and props, and opened the festival up to include Battle Alley again, and make it more walkable.

This weekend, there is a live nativ-

ity, and more performers overall. The committee has been working all week in between, tweaking the festival based on the first weekend, and even building new signs.

So far, Kullis' five-year plan for the festival is going well, but he has his sights set a little higher — featuring Holly's signature festival in the Thanksgiving Day Parade in Detroit. Considering this early success, you might have to mark your calendars for 2018.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

The Holly High School Marching Band anchored the event, parting the crowd of 1,000, as it marched its way down Saginaw Street.

DICKENS FESTIVAL DETAILS

DECEMBER TIMES AND DATES:

Saturday, Dec. 6 from 1-8 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 7 from 1- 5 p.m.

This weekend's attractions include children's readings at the Hadley House Museum, dance performances, St. Dominic's Choir at the Holly Hotel, roaming street magic, living nativity, chili and confections tent and an art show.

Saturday, Dec. 13 from 1-8 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 14 from 1-5 p.m.

Attractions this weekend include the Run Like the Dickens race, all-day scavenger hunt, cupcake eating contest, a cappella duet, choir and dance performances.

Go to hollydickensfestival.org for more on scheduling



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

The festival committee has received numerous compliments on the new festival signage displayed downtown.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

The first weekend of the festival the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) mobile platform had 900 visitors. They will be at the festival again next weekend.

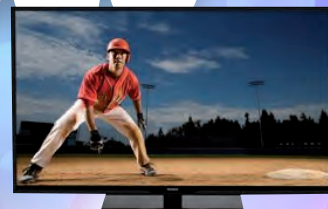


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Jeanette Giroux waits outside The Great Lakes Marketplace with Andrew, 9, and Autumn Williams, 7, as fellow visitors enjoy other downtown businesses.

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