Another new downtown building on tap

Structure will be located just south of Cornerstone

By Sharon Stone
sstone@cttimes.com; 810-433-6786

Downtown Fenton is in the midst of a renaissance after having completed two redevelopment projects and the nearly finished expansion of the Fenton Community and Cultural Center. And, according to city officials, that’s just the beginning of major revitalization on the horizon for Fenton.

Fenton City is interested in the redevelopment of the 7,500-square-foot lot south of the Cornerstone building that is next on deck for development.

Hundreds of area students not vaccinated

Experts hopeful tightened policies will result in more immunized children

By Sharon Stone
sstone@cttimes.com

Parents of 247 local students have submitted immunization waivers this school year to the respective school district so that their child does not need to be vaccinated for at least one immunization-preventable disease. This number may seem high, however, it reflects just a small percentage of the entire student body of each district.

The state requires all schools, public or private, to submit their immunization numbers to the county for students in kindergarten, seventh grade or any new student to the district.

The four local school districts broke down their numbers by building, but keep in mind these numbers (see sidebar) only reflect students in kindergarten, seventh grade or new to the district.

Mark Valacak, health officer with the Geneseo County Health Department, said schools have a Feb. 15 deadline to turn in their numbers.

Jackie Bowman of Holly holds son Austin, 17 months, for his round of immunizations by medical assistant Judy Walker on Wednesday. “I hope people start learning that vaccinations are the way to go,” said Bowman. “I don’t understand why people don’t want to do it.”

Police department provides safe meeting place for online transactions

Fenton station offers use of parking lot, lobby 24 hours a day

By Sharon Stone
sstone@cttimes.com; 810-433-6786

Fenton Police Chief Rick Aro said their goal is to provide a safe environment for these transactions and to reduce the possibility of fraud, robbery and assaults from occurring.
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Fenton — It was the moment of truth. Time was running out, and the deadline was drawing close for all robots under the F.I.R.S.T. Robotics program to be finished and ready for competition.

A lot of student finagling, gentle ribbing and technical prowess later, the robot moved for the first time. Dual joysticks controlled on a laptop, via a wireless network and a controller, sent the 6-foot tall “shelf-bot” careening about the media center obstacle course, motors whining with sometimes a little too much speed, sometimes startling the observers on the fringes of the course.

Fenton’s robot looks like a big metal shelf, but all the local teams’ robots look different. Fenton, Lake Fenton, Linden and Holly robots have to complete the same task, and every year, however, the task is different.

The 2015 F.I.R.S.T. (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition game is called “Recycle Rush.” The robot needs to work in teams to stack recycling totes and a garbage can on the field of play, and move it onto a scoring area. Local teams will compete with 40 others.

See ROBOTICS on 14A

Nicholas Knoch
LFHS robotics team captain

When we compete in Michigan, we really want to compete against the best of the best. You always want the contest.

Nicholas Knoch
LFHS robotics team captain
Wake up call for all network media?

Let’s talk about Brian Williams for a moment.

I have a friend named Terry who was in the U.S. Army in the late ‘60s. Whenever he is asked if he was in Vietnam, he always answers the same: ‘Yes, but I don’t want to talk about it.’

As it turns out, Terry was in Vietnam. And he was in a combat zone. En route to Japan on a military transport, his plane stopped for refueling at an American air base in Vietnam. No one left the plane and they were only on the ground for 30 minutes. Every soldier on the plane received in-country ‘combat pay’ for that month. Terry never stepped foot in Vietnam again.

But, I digress. Back to Brian Williams.

I don’t believe that Brian Williams is a bad guy. I think he is simply a victim of his own success. When people tell you how wonderful you are for 10 straight years, I suspect (not from personal experience) that anyone would get an inflated and unrealistic view of themselves.

I don’t believe that Brian Williams is a coward. It takes guts for any civilian to ride on a helicopter in any war zone. Especially when being aware that a similar helicopter on the same flight path was hit by enemy fire just an hour before you, I commend him for that.

But, I do believe that Brian Williams is dishonest. Most don’t realize that he is not just the news anchor, he is the Managing Editor of NBC Nightly News. That means he alone decides what, and how, news is presented each evening. I have watched for years as he and his NBC colleagues have shaped their newscasts through misrepresentations, enhanced or misleading data and facts, outright lies and, most egregiously, intentional omission of facts and events in order to promote the liberal agenda.

Consider the fact that Williams was deluded enough to believe he could chronically tell the same lie over and over on national TV and never get called out by the soldiers and colleagues he was actually with. It was a huge, and very stupid, risk with little or no upside. It’s certainly no stretch to assume that the same dishonesty contaminated all NBC news content under his watch.

As I said, I don’t believe Brian Williams is a bad guy, but he is dishonest. There is a zero probability that he will ever answer any newscast again. Hopefully, it’s a wake-up call for all network news organizations.

We’re not going to hold our presidents and politicians to the same moral standard as we do our newscasters. If we did, they’d be out of a job also.

Oh, and Terry, thank you for your service.

Opinions offered herein are the author’s alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Tri-County Times or its staff. Email the King at bking@tctimes.com. Some content adapted from the internet.

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Julie Short
Fenton

“The Chinese restaurant, because there is a lot of American food in Fenton.”

Cheryl Cortese
Fenton

“A good hamburger joint like Wendy’s, because sometimes, you want something simple.”

Doug Crane
Fenton

“Giles, because it had great down-home food and had the greatest burger bar.”

Carl Morroco
Argentine Township

“Wendy’s, because I liked their burgers.”

Craig Senter
Linden

“Frank’s Tavern, because I used to eat there as a child as a treat.”

let's talk about...
Elementary school changes of concern to Linden parents

By Yvonne Stegall
ystegall@climatem.com; 810-433-6702

After "K-5" Times heard from a concerned parent in the Linden school district, Superintendent Ed Koledo was asked to clarify the story behind the buzz about changes coming to Linden’s three elementary schools.

The biggest concern expressed by the parent was the possibility of a different system being implemented that would break the elementary system up, having K-1 in one building, grades 2 and 3 in another, and 4 and 5 in the third building. Koledo said this is called Grade Level Centers, and the idea behind this concept is to help save money.

"Right now the school district is not in a financial crunch, but it makes sense to prepare for it," Koledo said. He will be gone next year so he wanted the time to begin looking at options now. "I just wanted them to start looking into their options and the financial future of the schools."

Koledo is currently a lieutenant colonel in the Army National Guard and his unit is being mobilized sometime in the fall of 2015 for overseas deployment.

Just as many other members of the school faculty and school board, Koledo said, "K-5 is something we all love and fought for in the past. It’s the best setup." However, the Grade Level Centers offer ways to save money, even though there is no proof they work any differently educationally. Koledo said, if they can find a way around the cost savings of Grade Level Centers, they would prefer to stay with K-5.

Right now, all of this is just talk. The superintendent and the school board are not trying to hide anything from parents or teachers. According to information from Linden Elementary Principal Rob Pouch, there has been some discussion about cost containment ideas for the future.

"Those ideas included: K-5 alignment, secondary class size, going from trimesters to semesters, and employee concessions," he said. "Again, this is about getting in front of the funding challenge and as these topics are discussed at Board meetings, the timeline to implementation also has to be considered."

These decisions won’t be happening overnight. The ideas outlined during the last school board meeting, on Feb. 4, by the superintendent would have to be voted upon by the school board to be implemented and right now they are in no hurry to make changes over night.

In an email, Pouch said, "Obviously, you can’t restructure K-5 or move to semesters over night...these decisions will take input from staff and community."

Look for more information coming out ahead of board meetings as administrators define committee work that would be needed to develop plans to present to the Board. More information is coming.

The next Linden Board of Education meeting is on Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m. at the Linden High School library. Parents and community members who want more information are welcome to attend.
“Why all the household dust?”

For years, Power Vac, Inc. has been improving the community’s health one household at a time. “You know that half of all illnesses come directly from dirty indoor air? In fact, our indoor air is up to 90 times more polluted than the air outdoors,” explained Keith Meadows, Power Vac Owner and Operator. “More than 90% of the phone calls I receive are from distraught people complaining about dust in their homes. They tell me they will dust the house Friday, but by Sunday it needs to be done again, and they’re not sure where these dust piles are coming from. Let me tell you, you’re not a bad housekeeper. All you need to do is have your ducts cleaned. This simple step will drastically reduce the dust in your household. The reason for the dust is your cold air returns. You see, cold air returns suck in dirty air. Over time it builds up in your ducts until the debris resembles what you would find in your vacuum bag.”

See for yourself! For an actual photo of the debris that is pulled from a typical home’s ducts, visit our website www.callpowervac.com.

“Cold air returns are also the reason new homeowners experience excessive dust. While work was being done in the home, your cold air returns sucked all the dust through the system. It settled on the bottom of the duct lines and little by little, that debris is being blown back into your home,” Keith continued. “Here’s a test. Take a walk down into your basement, and look up at the ceiling for thin sheets of tin nailed between your basement, and look up at the ceiling for thin sheets of tin nailed between your basement, and look up at the ceiling for thin sheets of tin nailed between your basement, and look up at the ceiling for thin sheets of tin nailed between your basement, and look up at the ceiling for thin sheets of tin nailed between your basement, and look up at the ceiling for thin sheets of tin nailed between your basement, and look up at the ceiling for thin sheets of tin nailed between your basement, and look up at the ceiling for thin sheets of tin nailed between your basement, and look up at the ceiling for thin sheets of tin nailed between your basement.

“You need to beware of companies using cheap equipment and advertising cheap prices. Most of these companies are unlicensed, or they may advertise that they are licensed, but are not. Avoid scams by not falling for cheap, get-you-in-the-door prices. What sets us apart from our competitors is our honest service, and, of course, our equipment. I know the importance of being on time, working with a smile and respecting people’s homes and their belongings. There are a lot of duct cleaners around, but rest assured you’ll receive the same quality of service I expect from our equipment. McLaughlin, said that the GCAC is there to assist in any animal cruelty case.

“Often, we receive the first calls to check the welfare of all types. Where necessary, we will petition the court of jurisdiction to take custody of the animal. The calls may come from the public, police or other governmental agencies, and from animal rescue groups,” he said.

Wallace also said that GCAC helps local police departments by actually taking animals into custody under either court or police order, to care for the animal while the court cases proceed.

“Animals brought to the shelter that appear to be abused or neglected are examined by veterinarians, thoroughly documented, and the cases are turned over to the local jurisdiction police department or investigated by the Office of the Sheriff,” Wallace added.

Local help for abused animals

By Yvonne Stegall
ystegall@times.com 810-433-6792

Two animal abuse bills are heading to their third reading in the Michigan Senate.

According to the bill’s summary, “Under the Michigan Penal Code, a person who owns, possesses, is in charge of, or has custody of an animal is subject to criminal penalties for acts of animal neglect or cruelty.”

Under the new laws, if they were to pass, the worst offenders, being those who abuse 25 or more animals or who have three or more prior convictions, would face felony charges and up to seven years in prison.

The bills would also amend the Michigan Penal Code to extend current animal neglect or cruelty prohibitions to a breeder or pet shop operator; revise and enhance the penalties for animal neglect or cruelty; and establish three degrees of killing or torturing an animal.

Under this new bill, the first three levels of penalties would be the same. “A person may not knowingly kill, torture, mutilate, maim, or disfigure an animal; commit a reckless act knowing or having reason to know that it will cause an animal to be killed, tortured, mutilated, maimed, or disfigured; or knowingly poison an animal.” Under the bill, this violation would be a third-degree killing or torturing of animals. It would be second-degree if the animal was a companion animal. A person would be guilty of a first-degree offense if they killed, tortured, mutilated, maimed, disfigured, or poisoned a companion animal.

Under the pending bill, “first-, second-, and third-degree killing or torturing of animals would be felonies, punishable by a maximum fine of $5,000, up to 500 hours of community service, and a maximum prison term of 10 years for a first-degree offense, seven years for second-degree, and four years for third-degree.”

Similar bills have been brought to the legislature in the past and not made it through. However, it is still important that people are knowledgeable about animal abuse and do what they can to prevent it.

Paul Wallace, director at Genesee County Animal Control, said that the GCAC is there to assist in any animal cruelty case.

“We also have a wide network of rescues and shelters, volunteers who help care for and re-home animals. There’s really no end to what we may have to do,” Paul Wallace GCAC director

Paul Wallace, at Genesee County Animal Control in Linden, talked about the GCAC’s role in helping with animal cruelty cases.

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$46 billion in college scholarships available for students

Your child is likely eligible for financial assistance

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com, 810-629-8282
Vanessa Ferguson, 33, earned her undergraduate degree from University of Michigan-Flint and two master’s degrees from Michigan State University and Eastern Michigan University — and it didn’t cost her a dime.

Earning $100,000 in grants and scholarships, she completed her higher education without saddling herself or her family with any student debt.

Today, she’s an adjunct professor at Mott Community College and the owner of her own public relations firm, Action Communications.

Ferguson, who lives in Grand Blanc with her husband, Kris, estimates she earned about $35,000 in scholarships, with the remaining funds coming from grants from the schools she attended.

This strategy of raising money for college is an opposite approach from accruing massive student debt from federal loans that can “strangle” a young person’s financial future, according to U.S. News & World Report, the average student loan debt is now approaching $30,000, with many in highly professional fields like medicine owing an average of $166,250.

“Student debt has surpassed credit card debt as the largest area of debt in people’s lives,” said Drew Shapiro, president of the Fenton Board of Education. “It’s so difficult to help these people. They can’t afford to pay for health insurance, buy a house, or help their kids pay for college in the future. It’s a whole domino effect that’s running out of control.”

Shapiro recently hosted Scholarship Success 2 at the Fenton VFW Hall, using Ferguson and Kelli Hoppe, an experienced financial aid professional, as presenters.

There is $46 billion in free scholarship money awarded each year by the Department of Education and colleges themselves, according to collegeplanningservices.org.

Approximately $35 million is available through private companies, foundations and civic groups. One local organization, the Curtis-Wolverton VFW Post, awards a local scholarship and only one person had applied for it, according to Ferguson.

Ferguson said that finding scholarships is easier today thanks to the Internet, which was in its infancy when she graduated from Valley Christian Academy in Flint in 1999.

“One of the most important things about applying for scholarships is that you have to do it early,” she said. “It takes a lot of discipline to fill out all the applications, write essays and provide additional paperwork, but it’s worth it. I was able to pay for all my tuition, books, everything, and I had made the decision to live at home to save more money.”

According to scholarships.com, high school students should make their scholarship applications by October of their senior year to keep up with many of the deadlines.

How do you know where to find scholarship opportunities? According to Shapiro, a good place to start is your high school counseling office. Shapiro also posts links to scholarship opportunities on his Facebook Page, Drew Shapiro: Fenton School Board.

“You can also use helpful scholarship websites, like collegeboard.com, collegeNet.com, fastweb.com and scholarships.com,” he said.

Student debt is still an issue at the Ferguson household, with Kris starting out his career after graduation with $65,000 in debt. “We both had the same amount of education, a bachelor’s degree and two master’s,” she said. “I don’t know what we’d’ve done if we both had that kind of debt.”

Noah Morgan, CFP®, Private Wealth Advisor at Acorn Wealth Advisors, LLC in Grand Blanc, MI has been authorized by the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards (CFP Board) to use the CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and CFP® certification marks in accordance with CFP Board certification and renewal requirements. As the younger, Certified Financial Planner in Genesee County/Livingston/Shiawassee county, Morgan helped launch Acorn Wealth Advisors in May 2014 alongside longstanding local Financial Advisors Steven Bliss, CFP®, and Co-Founder Todd Tarrantino, CFP®. Morgan has been integral to the overall success of the new company and is responsible for working with families and local business owners to create and manage financial plans.

Morgan specializes in working with clients to create custom plans to help people meet their unique goals in collaboration with the team at Acorn Wealth Advisors. It’s easy to find a financial advisor—but finding an advisor with your best interests at heart is another matter. Acorn Wealth Advisors was created specifically to provide our clients with the best possible advice and financial solutions, period. As an independent Registered Investment Advisor, we are free from larger firms’ pressure to sell a specific point of view or investment product. In a landscape dominated by enormous financial firms and one-person shops, Acorn Wealth Advisors presents a unique alternative. Our highly dedicated eight-person staff provides world-class expertise alongside the personal attention of a boutique. And our commitment to a client-first approach means that each client receives the full attention and expertise of our entire team. With these objectives in mind, Morgan’s end goal is to help clients achieve Financial Peace of mind.

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**Immunizations by the numbers**

Students in kindergarten, seventh grade and new to the school district who have waived the required immunizations

**Fenton Area Public Schools**
- Ellen Street Campus .............. 29
- North Road Elementary ........... 10
- Tornek Eastern Elementary ....... 13
- State Road Elementary .......... 8
- AGS Middle School ............... 30
- Fenton High School ............... 8

**Lake Fenton Community Schools**
- West Shore Elementary ........... 16
- Torrey Hill Intermediate School .... 3
- Lake Fenton Middle School .......... 13
- Lake Fenton High School .......... 9

**Linden Community Schools**
- Argentine Elementary .......... 3
- Central Elementary ............. 8
- Hyatt Elementary .............. 9
- Linden Elementary .......... 10
- Linden Middle School ......... 2
- Linden High School ........ 5

**Holly Area Schools**
- Davisburg Elementary .............. 13
- Holly Elementary .............. 12
- Patterson Elementary .......... 6
- Rose Pioneer Elementary ......... 6
- Holly Middle School ............ 22
- Holly High School ............ 15

*Source: school superintendents*

**IMMUNIZED**

*Continued from Front Page*

There are three categories that parents could use to be issued a waiver. Valacak said a child might have a medical condition where the child could have an allergic reaction to a vaccine. He added this is rare. Another reason not to vaccinate is that a child’s physician might not agree with the recommended schedule of vaccines (see sidebar). A third reason is when a particular vaccine is given twice, maybe six months apart, and the child is behind only because they have not had the second shot. Those children will be up to date once they have had the second shot.

Valacak said Genesee County has fewer unvaccinated people compared with the state average. In the past, Valacak said some parents would inform their child’s school that they were behind with vaccinations because they could not get a doctor’s appointment in time. Waivers used to be handed out for convenience.

A new law that went into effect in January eliminates waivers based on convenience. Parents are being made aware of this and only legitimate medical conditions can be cited as a reason.

Valacak is well aware of the misinformation spread by people who have many followers linking vaccinations to autism. “It was fabricated data,” he said. “The science of the matter is that vaccines prevent diseases.”

As the recent measles outbreak stays in the news and more people become aware of just how dangerous measles, as well as other diseases can be, more vaccinations are occurring. Valacak said families, doctors and the counties need to work together to make sure everyone is up to date. Valacak said the health department’s goal for next year is to be able to compile a complete list electronically, for every school building, of all students who are not up to date with their vaccinations.

Joe Simmert, D.O., of The Children’s Office, a pediatric practice of three board-certified physicians who have assumed the practice of Dr. Chandra Puttagunta in Fenton, is well aware of the vaccination issue. “We’ve been tolerant (of the anti-vaccine movement) for a long time. Policies are going to start to tighten, putting more responsibility on the parents. Now, if a school doesn’t have proof you’ve vaccinated your child, you’re going to have to go to the health department and watch a video that addresses these issues. There’s a lot of misinformation out there.”

“I hope that people who decide not to vaccinate their child pick a resource for that information that will be held accountable for any consequences. If you can’t hold that resource accountable, then you should probably take the information provided with a grain of salt. I am a tangible resource. I want you to hold me accountable for the health information I give you for your child. That’s a more credible source. “If I tell you it’s safe to vaccinate your child, then it’s safe for you to vaccinate your child. It’s my hope that we can build a trusting relationship where I can be that source of information for you.”

Reporter Sally Rummel contributed to this story.
Lasco Ford launches into 2015 with $5.5 million expansion

**Dealership earns Michigan’s Ford Dealer of the Year Award**

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

One thing you can say for sure about Matt and Jay Lasco — they aren’t taking their responsibility at the helm of their long-time family dealership sitting down.

Under their leadership, Lasco Ford has launched into 2015 with a $5.5 million expansion project that has created not only one of the largest auto dealerships in the tri-county area, but also an unparalleled level of customer service, according to the Lasco brothers.

“We’ve been here for 32 years and we want to be here for another 30 years,” said Matt, 36. “We wanted to give our customers the very best. This is our commitment to them for not only the sale, but after the sale.”

The new service department has its own state-of-the-art facility, with about 27,000 square feet devoted to the maintenance and repair of vehicles and the comfort of their owners. This new facility also houses the body shop and parts department.

Customer comfort is key, which begins when each car drives into a heated service area that is 100 percent noise-controlled. After leaving their vehicle inside, customers meet with their service advisor in a private, quiet setting. Once their vehicle has been taken in for maintenance or repair, he or she can enjoy an inviting, relaxed lounge area boasting huge TVs for easy viewing, a complementary coffee bar also stocked with bottled water for guests and a nearby children’s play area.

In addition to 28 new service bays and tripping their staff of mechanics, this brand new building also offers new equipment that provides free checks for alignment, battery, tires and an overall vehicle health check, including engine code analysis. “These services are available for free to anyone,” said Jay, 33.

Both brothers are excited about the new possibilities that this facility and these services offer for customers. “We now have the ability to service cars faster than ever,” said Jay.

Matt added, “Within the next 90 days, we’ll be open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. You’ll never have to miss a day of work with your vehicle.”

While it’s an exciting new chapter for Lasco Ford, the new service facility is only the beginning of the complete renovation of the business. The original building, now housing used and new vehicle sales, financing and accounting, is in the process of a major overhaul, to be completed by early fall.

“It’s as close to being a brand new build as it can be,” said Jay. “It will be completely renovated inside and out, and will also include a huge addition at the rear of the building.”

When the project is completed, it will house a state-of-the-art showroom, as well as all new offices for its various business departments. “Each of the buildings is completely self-sufficient,” said Jay. “We’ll also have a relaxing wait lounge in this building, as well as a children’s play area.”

Perhaps the most visible change to the public is the huge number of Ford vehicles lined up in the dealership’s new parking area on Owen Road. “We literally have well over 100 new cars out there,” said Jay. “Having all this space allows us to have an all-new selection for our customers.”

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**PLUMBING SERVICE CALL**

SPECIAL $24.95

Normally $59**

*Must mention coupon when scheduling. Offer valid on initial service call and with repair only. One offer per visit. Cannot be combined with any other discounts. Valid Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Holidays excluded. Offer valid through 2/28/15. TCT*

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State campground fees are going up

Camper at most popular locations will see a $4 increase in daily fees

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

It has been a few years since the last time the state-operated campgrounds in Michigan raised their camping fees. According to Ron Olson, chief of parks and recreation for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), they haven’t changed since 2007.

Olson said, “The higher fees will help us keep pace with normal operations and improve the infrastructure. The infrastructure, he said, is about $300 million behind in needed repairs, so this higher fee is much needed.

The amount of the increase depends mainly on the popularity of the campgrounds. Those with 82 percent or greater occupancy over the past year will have a $4 per day increase. Mid-level campgrounds will go up $2 per day and low-level, $1.

The new fees are already implemented into the system. Olson said that most campgrounds start taking reservations for the upcoming season six months in advance, so these prices have been set for a few months.

Many people are showing concerns over the upgrade in charge, according to Olson, but the money goes to a good cause and with changes in the cost of things like electricity, it makes sense that inflation would bring up camping costs too.

Olson said there are three things that bring money into the campgrounds to keep them running, clean and up to standards. The camping fees are the most important, bringing in the most money. The recreation passport, which is needed in order to enter the park, and costs $11, is the second thing bringing money in. The last are mineral and gas royalties. If you are planning a camping trip this year within the great state of Michigan, consider camping at one of the many state campgrounds, knowing your money goes back into preserving this legacy.

The higher fees will help us keep pace with normal operations and improve the infrastructure.

Ron Olson
Chief of parks and recreation Michigan DNR

Popular state campgrounds will be increasing their daily fees by $4 from what they have been charging. Increases at less popular campgrounds will not be as much.

The request for proposal (RFP) is available for download at www.cityoffenton.org. Developers who are interested must provide sealed RFP responses to the City Clerk’s Office on or before Monday, March 16, 2015 at 11 a.m.

The RFP responses will be reviewed by the city manager and city personnel. Submissions will be evaluated on viability and attractiveness of concept plan and compatibility with existing development in the city and downtown. The developer’s demonstrated capability and experience with similar projects and ability to work with a broad stakeholder group will be a major factor.

Once the evaluation of proposals is completed, selected developers will be asked to present proposals to a committee designated by the city manager. After the interviews, the city will select two to three developers for further due diligence and financial analysis. The city will then select a developer to discuss the project and sale of the property.

The higher fees will help us keep pace with normal operations and improve the infrastructure.

Ron Olson
Chief of parks and recreation Michigan DNR

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Lobdell Lake - $210,000
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Linden Schools - $134,900
4 Bedrooms, 2.5 Bathrooms & 1,962 Sq. Ft.

Linden Schools - $134,900
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The make-up, size and experience of the teams are different in each school, and most offer both high school, and middle school team opportunities.

Every local district at least has a high school team of its own. Holly High School has a team, which is combined with Brandon High School, to form Truck Town Thunder Robotics.

Lake Fenton has fewer adult engineer mentors than Fenton. Linden is a slightly newer, smaller team. Some teams have legitimate financial backing — not any local teams, but The Killer Bees Notre Dame Preparatory School has serious auto industry backing, facilities and mentoring.

Schools like Lake Fenton have few mentors, and are largely student run, while there were about six mentors at Fenton High School that afternoon.

Mike Cason is a mentor at Linden High School. His daughter was part of the team, and after she graduated, he stuck around to help. He said their robot wasn’t tall like Fenton’s, and the policy at LHS is to let the students do much of the work. Their first competition is in March.

The Fenton High School Robotics team crowds around their 2015 robot, as student, Emma Lane, on the mechanical team.

Like any team sport, it’s usually pay to play. Fenton students, for example, have to pay $100, and then raise $400. Building a robot from parts and taking it to competition isn’t cheap.

The Linden High School team (named RoboEagles) has a budget of $10,000, which is actually minimal, even compared to Fenton’s budget, which is closer to $25,000.

Teams are responsible for fundraising the dollars necessary to design, test, build, and send their robot to competition.

Several weeks ago, Lake Fenton’s HAZMAT robotics team was busy working on the lift arm system for the totes, while the chassis was being built on another table, because certain parts hadn’t yet arrived.

Nicholas Knoch, 17, is a senior and is the team captain. He said problem-solving skills are taught by robotics, along with technical aspects like building, and programming.

In just six weeks, each team builds their robot, finishing by Feb. 17. Lake Fenton has a couple old robots hanging out, which are used for training, though old parts are not allowed in the new robot, for the most part.

To foster healthy competition, teams regularly mentor each other, and share component designs online.

Knoch said the team has helped develop a mini-engineering center for the school. Grant funds for equipment to build the robot benefits CAD and engineering classes.

The LFHS team was sponsored by GM for competition entries, which can cost $5,000. Linden is sponsored by Chrysler.

Each team forms almost a mini-business in order to support their team. Fenton’s 27-member team is dominated by boys, though there are three girls on the team. Sara Gadwa, one of the faculty team leaders, said, “Robotics is huge.” Gadwa, a math teacher, was on hand Sunday afternoon.

In the end, the robot is completed in the allotted time, by a team that handles design, construction, programming, operating, and business to get their machine to competition. One of the first competitions for local teams is at Kettering University in Flint, on March 5.
From A-Z...

BENEFITS & CHARACTERISTICS OF FRUITS and VEGETABLES

F is for fig, G is for grape...

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

Part five of an ongoing series

Just like D and E, there aren’t tons of fruits and vegetables in the F and G categories, so to save some time on this series the Times has chosen to combine a couple more letters.

Hopefully, this little list of healthy produce will inspire you to add something new to your diet. While this is not a comprehensive list, it does give you a taste of the fruits and vegetables that are out there, what they can do for your health and how you can fit them into your meals each day.

FENNEL

Fennel is popular in Mediterranean cuisine, with a crunchy and slightly sweet flavor. The bulb, stalk, leaves and seeds are all edible on this vegetable. It is high in fiber and antioxidants. The bulb is also believed to help lower bad cholesterol levels.

Fennel can be sautéed and added to meals as a side, or it’s great sliced up on a sandwich.

FIG

Fig Newtons are probably the least healthy way to enjoy the benefits of figs. Figs are high in fiber, they are a great source of potassium, and they help with eye health by fighting macular degeneration. While those tasty fig cookies may be the only thing you can think of for getting figs into your diet, fresh figs make a great addition to smoothies and they also taste wonderful chopped up in a fresh salad.

GRAPE

Grapes have many great benefits, and they are rich in many things. A couple of the great things you’ll find in these sweet (or sometimes sour) little fruits are vitamin K (great for your eyes) and copper. It’s easy to add grapes into your diet. Munch on them fresh, eat them frozen as a great cool treat, and add them to salads. Grapes aren’t just great in fruit salad, but are also amazing added to a fresh garden salad.

GRAPFUIT

Doctors urge caution when it comes to patients on certain medications consuming grapefruit or grapefruit juice. Check with your doctor first if you are on any prescription medications. Grapefruit, like all citrus fruits, are rich in vitamin C. They make a great alternative to oranges when it comes to a fresh snack. Not only are they immune boosting, they also boost metabolism, which is why they are known as a diet food. Grill slices, eat them fresh and alone, or enjoy in a salad.

GUAVA

Guava fruit are very rich in protein and contain a lot of fiber. Guava contains more than 628 percent of the daily value of vitamin C, 21 percent of vitamin A and 20 percent of folate. The negative of guava is that they contain fructose, which should be consumed in moderation. Guava can be added to salads and even salsas.

GREEN BEAN

Even cooked, green beans pack a lot of healthy power. They contain vitamins K, C, A, E and a few different B vitamins. They also contain manganese, fiber, folate, copper, magnesium, chromium, calcium, iron, phosphorus, potassium, choline and protein. They also have omega-3 fatty acids. That’s a lot for one bean.

Green beans are easy to introduce in your diet. They make a great side, are delicious fresh, added to salads, and can make a wonderful colored addition to soup.

GARLIC

Garlic is a vegetable and it deserves an A+. That’s because it is an anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and antiviral. That’s why garlic is a popular addition to the diet for people suffering a cold or sore throat. Garlic is delicious roasted, but can also easily be added fresh to many meals. Dice a clove up to add to salads, soup, to sauté with meats or vegetables or cook up in some butter for an easy bread topping.
America had national family favorites such as Howard Johnson’s, Bill Knapp’s, Damon’s Steakhouse, TCBY, Bonanza Steakhouse, Chi-Chi’s, White Tower hamburgers, Bennigan’s, Burger Chef, Sambo’s, Steak & Ale and Kenny Rogers Roasters in past years, and now they’re gone.

Here’s an unofficial list of nearly 100 local eateries in Fenton, Linden and Holly that have closed in the past two decades.

Maybe you have some of your own favorites that closed that aren’t mentioned on this list. Please contact the Times at news@tctimes.com to add names to this list.

• A&W Root Beer, downtown Fenton location
• A.C. Classic Pizza
• Across Town Café
• Andrico’s Family Restaurant
• Argentine Lighthouse
• Austin’s Café, Holly
• Bear Creek Coffee, Linden
• Big Tony’s Pizza, Holly
• Biggby Coffee, Owen Road
• Blackburn’s Subs
• Blimp’s Subs
• Breadscaus Pizza
• Brick Oven, The
• Broadstreet Restaurant, Linden
• Burger King (on LeRoy Street)
• Cafe on the Way
• Cardona’s Pizza
• Cathy’s Patisserie & Bakery
• Choc-Choc BBQ
• CK Cafe
• Classic Restaurant, The
• Coffee Beanery, on Silver Parkway
• Cold Stone Creamery, Fenton
• Common Grounds Café
• Corleone’s Pizza
• Crossbow Inn, Linden
• Dairy Queen, Fenton
• Del Rey Mexican
• Diner, The (now Shirley’s)
• Dolly’s Pizza
• Dominic’s Donut Shop
• Domino’s Pizza
• Dragon Pearl Chinese
• Dwain’s Diner
• Fast Eddie’s (in Kmart)
• Fenton Roadhouse
• Flame, The
• Frank’s Tavern
• Gatsby Grind
• Giles Family Restaurant
• Graceys Restaurant
• Grainery Pub, The
• Great Fenton Inn
• Great Lakes Family Restaurant
• Happy’s Pizza, Holly
• Hardie’s of Fenton
• Heritage House
• J.T. Wishbone Chicken
• Janelle’s Restaurant, Byron
• Jimmy G’s Roadhouse
• Joey’s Only Seafood
• Leroy’s Gourmet Burgers
• Little Caesar’s Pizza (Le-Roy Street Fenton location)
• Little Caesar’s Pizza (in Kmart)
• Little Dominick’s Pizza
• Little Joe’s Pizza
• Luigi’s on Leroy
• Maple Garden Chinese
• McDonald’s, Argentine
• Michaelangelo’s Pizza, Holly
• Michigan Bean Company, The
• McDoggie’s
• Navistarr, Lobdell Lake
• New Century Buffet
• NuNu’s Asian Kitchen
• Nut Bush, The
• O’Dooley’s Tavern
• O’Malley’s Galley
• Panda Water Ice
• Papa John’s Pizza
• Papa Murphy’s Take & Bake Pizza, Fenton
• Perky’s Coffee Shop
• Pier, Lobdell Lake, The
• PJ’s Place
• Pro Pizza
• Pub, The
• Puerto Nuevo, Holly
• Quizzo’s Subs, Fenton
• Richard’s Roadhouse
• Rocco’s Pizza, Fenton and Linden
• Roly Poly Sandwiches/ Wraps, Fenton
• Sakura Chinese Buffet
• Sicilian Brothers Pizza
• Soups and More
• Spoonz Tavern
• Sunshine Ice Cream
• Tacos & Treats
• T-Bones Tavern, Fenton
• Time Out Pizza
• Twin Gardens
• Up North Grill
• Uptown Broasted Chicken
• Val’s Pizza
• Village Pizza
• Wendy’s, Fenton
• Yosemite Steakhouse, Holly

About 80 percent of new businesses fail within the first two years, and failures in the food industry are higher than that.

Mark Rummel
Owner of Mancino’s Pizza & Grinders

Any others you can remember?

(Editor’s note: Mark Rummel is owner of Mancino’s Pizza & Grinders in Fenton and has watched the business climate of area eateries since opening his own restaurant in 1998.)
Five straight titles for Devils

By David Troppens
droppens@tctimes.com

Lake Fenton — Over the last five seasons, the Lake Fenton varsity wrestling team has certainly had its share of peak seasons recently. During that period the team has earned a spot at Battle Creek’s Kellogg Arena at the state tournament twice.

In 2011 the team made it to the state title match. But even the three seasons when the Blue Devils didn’t make it to Battle Creek, they’ve all had something in common — each of the last five squads have won team district championships.

Lake Fenton’s young squad easily clinched its fifth straight district crown on Wednesday, defeating Flint Powers 62-18 in the opening round and beating Mount Morris 64-12 in the title match to earn the championship.

“It’s pretty cool. It means a lot to us,” said Tristen Nevadomski, one of just two seniors on the squad. “It’s kind of a no-brainer.”

See DEVILS on 19A

Eagles are headed to regionals

By David Troppens
droppens@tctimes.com

The Linden varsity wrestling squad had won five team district titles in 15 years, but it had been since 2009 since the squad won its last crown.

That changed on Thursday night. The Eagles made earned their sixth in 16 years by defeating Metro League rivals Holly 55-24 in the Division 2 district final match at Fenton High School. The Eagles opened the tourney by defeating Goodrich 47-24 in the semifinals.

Linden(2-1-2) hosts a Division 2 regional tournament on Wednesday. The Eagles will take on another Metro foe, Brandon, in the semifinals. The winner of that match will face either Kearsley or Marysville with the winner earning a spot in the Division 2 team state tournament at Battle Creek’s Kellogg Arena.

“We’ve been in contention ever since our last one, but Holly has had some tough squads and Goodrich has won a few state titles. We are excited,” Linden coach Todd Skinner said. “I think it is a

See EAGLES on 19A

Regional Ski Action

The Holly/Oxford ski team is headed to the Division 2 state meet as regional champions. Fenton/Linden skier Zoe Weinberg is doing the same. The Holly/Oxford boys ski team captured the regional crown.

Lars Jorgen-Kokate led the Holly/Oxford team by taking second in the slalom (53.68 seconds) and the giant slalom (43.8). Holly’s other high placers in the giant slalom were Dillon Sink in ninth (44.46), Zac Felix in 10th (44.52) and Max Ford in 12th (44.57). In the slalom their other top performers were Felix in 11th (57.82), Sink in 15th (58.67) and Ford in 19th (59.19).

Weinberg defended her regional title in the giant slalom with a combined time of 44.85 seconds. She missed repeating as slalom champion by .05 seconds taking second (56.70).

The Fenton/Linden boys were led by Andy Bennett. He placed 20th in the slalom (59.34), while Brendan McInerney took 22nd in the giant slalom (45.26).

The Holly/Oxford girls were paced by Emma Ford who took fifth in the giant slalom (46.27) and 13th in the slalom (1:02.85).
Bronchos capture 10th straight win, beat Skyline

By David Troppens
droppersons@cttimes.com; 810-433-6789

Holly varsity boys basketball coach Lance Baylis doesn’t care if teams ended up making runs against his squad when the Bronchos at one time had a large lead.

He doesn’t care if his team is out-rebounded.

It seems when a team is 13-2 overall and riding a 10-game win streak, people can surface out of nowhere and argue why a team should be concerned despite its success for a variety of reasons.

What matters most to Baylis is if his team won. And for the 10th straight game, the Bronchos did just that against non-league Ann Arbor Skyline at home on Tuesday night.

The Bronchos outscored Skyline 25-13 and never trailed, eventually winning a 75-71 victory against the Eagles.

“It was a great game for us,” Baylis said. “We came out on fire running and gunning. Jake (Daniels) was shooting great and so was (Adam) Tooley. In the second half, it was a game of runs. Basketball is a game of runs. Coming in the game, we were ranked by Maxpreps as the 23rd best team in Class A. On Friday they lost by single-digits to Ann Arbor Huron, who has votes in the top 10. Skyline lost in the quarterfinals to the eventual state white champions last year. Those guys are good, and they made a run. But that’s why games are four quarters long. At the end of the day it’s you do score more points than them, and we did.”

The Bronchos wereizzling in the first quarter. Daniels scored 13 of his team-high 24 points in the opening quarter, netting three three-pointers during the first eight minutes. Tooley also had a strong opening, scoring all 11 of his points in the first half. The pair led the Bronchos to a 43-30 lead into halftime.

As should’ve been expected, Skyline made a run in the second half. The Eagles cut Holly gap to 53-44 entering the fourth quarter, and tied it up at 65-all. Holly’s Josh Simms and Skyline’s Alexander-White each matched treys, keeping the contest tied at 68-all late. However, Daniels scored his final two points, giving the Bronchos the lead for good. Simms iced the game by netting free throws in the final seconds.

“This is a signature win,” Baylis said. “It’s a school of 1,700 students who draws from a good population. This is one we were targeting.”

Daniels finished with 24 points and six rebounds, while Simms netted 14 points and nine rebounds. Ian Hodges and Tooley netted 11 points each, while Parker Rowse dishd 10 assists. Isaac Casillas netted nine points.

“We have experience,” Baylis said. “Maturity for us is huge. We have mental maturity and physical maturity. We are a mature team and we’re seeing that now. Out of our top seven, five are seniors.”

Tigers ice game in fourth, defeat Lapeer

By David Troppens
droppersons@cttimes.com; 810-433-6789

The Fenton girls basketball team was down by double-digits for the second time in four home games.

However, a great third quarter sealed the deal for the Tigers.

And with it, the Tigers got their eighth win of the season.

Fenton defeated Lapeer 43-30 Wednesday night.

“I think maturity is the key this year,” Fenton coach Sierra Arroyo said. “We’re learning on the fly. This is probably our worst game of the season, but it helps learning from the game. I think it’s good that we’re learning all year.”

Fenton had a tough go at the free-throw line during the game, netting just 11-of-20. They were 10-of-10 from inside the paint, with 22 points.

After falling behind 13-31 at the half, Fenton was only able to score 12 points in the third quarter.

Fenton’s Peyton Coffman (left) tries to find an opening in the Tigers’ 64-56 victory against Lapeer on Tuesday.

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Griffins battle to 3-3 draw with KBH United

By David Troppens
dtroppens@tctimes.com

It was a contest of at least three different twists. But after 59 minutes of action, all that the Metro League Griffins and KBH United settled was both teams are pretty even.

In what was a pivotal contest for the Metro League hockey title, KBH United and the Metro League Griffins were forced to settle for a 3-3 tie at Hartland Sports Center on Wednesday night.

KBH United, a co-op team involving players from Kearlsley, Brandon and Holly, scored three first-period goals to take the early advantage. However, the Metro League Griffins, a co-op squad involving players from Fenton and Linden, answered back with three goals in the final five minutes of the second period, tying the game at 3-3.

The two teams then played the 17 minutes of the third period and the eight-minute overtime period scoreless, resulting in the tie.

The draw was more important to KBH United, as the tie kept them in the race for at least a tie of the Metro League championship. The draw meant the Fenton-Linden co-op was eliminated from competing for the title.

Griffins’ coach Will Dawson was pleased with his team’s fight, coming back from three goals behind.

“They’ve done it all year long," Dawson said. “In the first game against KBH they scored four goals in the first period, but then we scored a goal late in the first (and made it a competitive game). The kids don’t quit. I respect that.

“I was really happy with the game. KBH is a really good team and I am proud to see the guys battle through adversity. We had our opportunities in the first period, but nothing was going in. But once they all said Connor (Phillips) score, he’s been our leader all season long, the guys were ready.’’

Kross Kenney scored for KBH (3-1-1) in the Metro with 15:14 left in the first period, and about four minutes later Shawn Larsen scored during a short-handed situation, making it 2-0. KBH made it 3-0 when Larsen scored again with 2:37 left in the first period.

The Griffins’ first goal came from Phillips with 4:14 left in the second period. He scored on assists by Mitch O’Levin and Jonah Lainese. The lead was cut to 3-1. Then, in a span of 54 seconds, the Griffins scored two more goals. With 1:57 left in the second period, Buck Hudson scored on assists by Phillips and Joe Moran.

The game’s scoring ended with 1:03 left in the second period on a Jake Thompson goal off assists by Brendan Buerkel and Dylan Miesch.

Dawson felt the Griffins (2-1-2 in the Metro) put some strong pressure of KBH’s net during the third period and the overtime. The squad hit the post twice during the extra session.

“Tought we won the game when Joe Moran put on off the crossbar,” Dawson said. “Unfortunately it hit the post.

Manny Vomvolakis made 22 saves for the Griffins, while Connor Martin made 29 saves for KBH.

EAGLES
Continued from Page 17A

The Eagles proved their strength by winning six of the eight matches on the mat between the two foes. Winning the match titles were Braxton Breeden (130), Bryce Davis (152), Cade Dickson (160), and Austin McNeill (285). Luke Zimmemman (112) earned a major decision victory, while Aaron Steedman (171) won a tight 2-1 verdict against Colin Dallwitz. Justin Cynjar (103), Chandler Monseny (125), Dawson Blank (140) and Patrick Kerr (145) won by forfeit.

Holly’s vicors were Carson Cuthbert (119) and Trever Hatfield (135), both by pinfall. Jimmy Gray (189) and Wyatt Lapo (215) won by forfeit.

Linden wrestlers winning two matches were Cygnar, Zimmerman, Blank, Kerr, Davis, Dickson and McNeill.

Holly advanced to the finals by defeating Fenton 43-21.

“It went as I thought,” Holly wrestling coach Don Platata said. “We battled hard, but we were giving up way too many points to a quality Linden team. I am very proud of my team with how they fought all year against all odds and all the issues we faced throughout the year.”
Continued from Page 17A during the 2014-15 prep basketball season, the ups are usually strong enough to lead the Blue Devils to a victory. That was the case at Mt. Morris High School on Tuesday, when Lake Fenton never trailed after the first quarter and defeated the Panthers 63-55.

The Blue Devils (6-4, 9-5) led at 10-9 with 2:11 left in the first quarter on a Chris Bell six-foot hoop, and pulled to double-digit leads at least once in each of the last three quarters. However, each time Lake Fenton extended the lead, Mt. Morris found a way to cut the gap back to a manageable gap before the Blue Devils would repeat the process.

The last time the cycle was completed came late in the fourth quarter. Mt. Morris cut Lake Fenton’s lead to just 46-41 after a 10-foot jumper by Eric Smith, but Lake Fenton responded with the game’s next five points. The first three came on a Jake Zielinski inbound pass to Andrew Foerster for a layin and a foul. Foerster made the free throw and the Blue Devils led 49-41.

About two minutes later, Zielinski made a putback hoop, giving the Blue Devils a 51-41 lead with 4:46 left to play. However, the pesky Panthers made their final push and actually cut the gap to 57-53 with a layup and a converted free throw off a putback hoop by Jarrett Duplanty with 1:15 left in the contest. But that’s when Lake Fenton’s Jalen Miller saved the day. Miller scored six points in a span of 27 seconds, clinching the Blue Devils’ win. First, he converted two free throws with 41.5 seconds left. He then scored on a layup off a nice dish from Bell with 21.0 seconds left.

Finally, he earned a steal just seconds after his layup and scored a breaking layup. As quickly as it suddenly became a game again, Miller blew it back out for Lake Fenton, giving the Blue Devils the GAC Red road win.

“I just don’t think we were there mentally,” said Lake Fenton coach Jake Erway sounding more like a losing coach than a winning mentor. “I think that’s our biggest thing.

“That’s been a common tendency this year. We go through stretches where we play great, and it looks like we are going to take care of business. Then we lose our focus, lose our mental toughness and let teams climb back in. I give Mt. Morris credit. I thought they outplayed us the majority of the game. I thought they worked harder than us. I thought they rebounded better than us.”

In the second quarter, the Panthers tied it at 15-all after a putback hoop by Duplanty, but after the hoop the Blue Devils dominated again, going on a 13-2 run. It ended with a Zielinski dish to Miller for a two-point perimeter shot, earning Lake Fenton a 28-17 lead. Mt. Morris cut the gap to 28-19 by halftime.

Mt. Morris hit 9-of-11 shots in the third quarter, helping the squad cut Lake Fenton’s lead to 36-33 with 3:35 left in the period. However, Lake Fenton called time and forced steals on Mt. Morris’ next three possessions, each resulting in Lake Fenton points. Just when it seemed Mt. Morris was back in the game, Lake Fenton scored 10 straight points, taking a 46-33 lead with 39 seconds left in the third. The run ended with a conventional three-point play by Bell.

Mt. Morris (3-7, 4-9) still trailed 51-41 after a putback hoop by Zielinski with 4:46 left in the fourth, but Mt. Morris had a 12-6 run, establishing its final run at Lake Fenton. However, once that run ended, Miller iced the game with his six last-minute points.

Miller finished with 21 points and nine rebounds. Foerster and Isaac Golston had eight points each, while Zielinski had seven points and four assists. Tyler Browning also provided seven points.

Girls Basketball Mt. Morris 71, Lake Fenton 39

The Blue Devils (3-12) were outscored 20-6 in the first quarter and 25-8 in the fourth, resulting in the loss.

 Sierra Arroyo led the Blue Devils with 13 points and four steals, while Sydney Shevachich had 10 points, Autumn Beardsley netted eight points and swatted four shots. Kim Roel had eight rebounds, while Lauren Oppenheimer had seven.

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Lower gas prices create new market for pickups, vans, SUVs

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

Bigger is better when it comes to hot sales numbers for SUVs and trucks during the kick-off automotive sales month of January 2015.

Lower fuel prices mean that gas-thirsty vehicles aren’t so expensive to fill up, and are driving the higher sales for larger models. Automakers sold 1.51 million new vehicles last month, according to sales tracker Autodata, 54 percent in the truck category, which includes pickups, vans and SUVs.

That figure is up 13.7 percent from sales in January 2014. Ford Motor Company reported its sales jumped 13.3 percent, mainly powered by truck sales with its new-design F-150.

According to Matt Lasco of Lasco Ford in Fenton, the 2015 F-150 is the most exciting vehicle they’ve had in a decade. “Customer feedback is incredible,” he said. “With lower gas prices, customers aren’t just heading to vehicles with the highest fuel efficiency; now they’re buying what they want to buy.”

Truck sales are very strong at Randy Wise GMC Buick in Fenton, reflecting a strong sales trend for the GMC brand nationally, which was up 28.6 percent in January.

Sales Manager Lisa Consiglio said that sales of their luxury, well-equipped brands like Sierra, Yukon and Yukon XL aren’t affected much by gas sales. “Our customers who buy trucks are going to buy them regardless of gas prices, because they need them for work or to trailer boats,” she said. “We were one of the top dealers in our zone in January and are off to a strong February. I don’t think gas prices affect sales in this area as much as in other areas. Incentives are good right now, which is also helping sales.”

Jeep is the starring brand for Chrysler, posting its best-ever monthly sales and...

See BIGGER on 23A

54%

The truck category accounted for 54 percent of auto sales in January

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**Winter car washes**

> Clean your vehicle regularly to keep road salt damage at bay

By Sally Rummel

news@tctimes.com; 810-629-6282

Winter may have its icy grip on Michigan, but you still need to wash and take care of your car or truck to keep up its best performance and value.

Snow, sleet and ice aren’t the only enemies a car owner battles in the winter. Road salt can accelerate the rusting process, especially on the undercarriage where salt and snow can be lodged out of sight.

Think of rust-preventive car washing like brushing your teeth. If you do it regularly, you won’t get cavities, and even if you do get a cavity, getting it filled will help keep it from getting worse. Rust on metal works the same way.

Here are a few “must-dos” to keep your car well maintained in the winter:

- Wash your car as soon as possible after the salt trucks are out on the roads, keeping in mind that you don’t want to freeze up your door locks, trunks or gas caps in frigid weather.
- To prevent that, lubricate your locks, gas cap and trunk with WD-40 so water can’t penetrate.

- Plan to wash your car once or twice a month at a car wash that has quality equipment to flush the salt and dirt from under the wheel wells, bumpers and rocker panels.
- Once you’ve washed the vehicle, check it for rust, especially in hard to spot places like inside the doors, around the drain holes in body panels and doors, in the wheel wells and under the car. If you catch rust early and make repairs, it won’t become a bigger problem.
- Use rubber or plastic car floor mats to absorb water and any corrosive substances you bring into the car on your shoes or boots.
- Replace your windshield wipers for better visibility and to protect your windshield from scratches. When you start to hear a scraping noise across the windshield, it’s time to change the wiper blades.
- Apply a water repellent to all glass surfaces on chilly days, to help heavy wet rain, snow, sleet and ice bead up and roll off the windshield.
- Wax your car in either a professional car wash or do-it-yourself in a heated garage, for added protection against corrosive road salt.

Source: carcare.org

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Sitting ‘idle’

It’s not necessary to ‘warm up’ the engine before driving, but local mechanics say it’s OK

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

We’ve all heard the idea that your car needs a little time to “warm up” before driving it, especially in the winter. That’s why many people across the U.S., especially in cold weather regions, do fire up their engines a few minutes or longer before setting out for the expressway.

Opponents of the practice cite wasting fuel and giving off greenhouse emissions and other types of pollution as reasons not to idle your car.

So, if you have a remote starter or like to go out a few minutes before leaving to “warm up your car,” is this a good practice, or will it damage your car in some way?

Nick Schulz, manager at Dewey’s Auto Repair in Fenton, said it’s better for your vehicle to run a few minutes, especially in bitter cold temperatures. “It gives the fluids a chance to lubricate the engine,” he said. “It won’t damage your car, as long as your engine has oil pressure.”

“You don’t see the cylinder walls in the engine if the oil isn’t warmed up enough,” said Matt Mosier, service advisor at Armstead Automotive in Holly. He recommends idling the car for about 10 minutes “or a little longer if it’s below zero. The fluid needs to get up to temperature in the transmission and power steering.”

He adds that letting the car idle for a few minutes will allow the alternator to bring up the battery, especially in the case of an older battery. “It’s not good to idle for an excessive amount of time, but 10 minutes is good,” he said.

Another experienced mechanic, Paul Warman, manager at Linden Complete Auto Repair, lets his car run for five to 10 minutes. “Technically, they say you don’t need to do that with the modern technology of cars today, but I do it. It allows the oil to spread all over the engine. I believe it prevents some wear and tear on the engine.”

That may not end the controversy over the practice of idling, but car owners who prefer to let their car run for a few minutes before heading out won’t pay any consequences other than a few extra dollars for fuel.

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Chris Wilkinson, Certified Mechanic

Q: I have a 94 510 1/2 ton 2nd pickup, 350 with the 350 tranny. It won’t shift unless above 2500 rpms, but closer to 3000. It normally shifts by 2500 rpms at about 15 mph but now it won’t shift until 35 mph which is a little much. Also, if I go wide open throttle it acts as if I was in neutral until I use a little gas, then it will accelerate again. It down shifts perfect but when shifting up it has to be high rpms. When it does shift, it is a smooth shift. - Jason

A: Jason, the first thing you need to look at is the vacuum modulator on the rear of the transmission. It has a vacuum hose going to it that is pulled off the hose off, make sure it does not have any transmission oil in it. Also make sure that is getting vacuum when the engine is running.

Next thing to check is the governor valve, which is located on the side of the transmission under a small round metal cover. You will need to take the cover off, then the governor will pull out. Now, hold it up and clean it with brake cleaner and shop air while moving the small metal wings on the side in and out. Also make sure the valve in the center moves freely while you are doing this.

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