Local county commissioner speaks on pandemic response

COVID-19 cases rise in Genesee County

By Hannah Ball
As of 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 14, Genesee County had 1,031 confirmed coronavirus cases and 84 deaths, according to the Genesee County Health Department. The county’s first four cases were confirmed March 20.

See PANDEMIC RESPONSE on 5

Tax Day 2020

Local accountant advises to file now if refund is expected, wait to July 15 if money owed

By Sharon Stone
Today, April 15, is traditionally the deadline to file your tax return with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and pay if you owe.

Due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, the deadline to file and pay federal taxes has been extended to July 15.

See TAX DAY on 7

COMMENT OF THE WEEK

"I need to practice social distancing from the refrigerator."

"Big shout out to The State Bank. I am a small business owner and applied for the SBA-Paycheck protection loan last week. Just got approval today and should be closing next week."

"The staff who self-quarantined with the residents at Vicinia Gardens deserve enormous gratitude for giving so unselfishly. Hearing the news of senior homes around the country that have high rates of diagnosed cases proves they did the right thing."
Whitmer faces backlash for pandemic response

Online petition gains more than 200,000 signatures

By Hannah Ball

A change.org petition to recall Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has more than 200,000 virtual signatures as of Tuesday, April 14.

This is in response to her strict “stay home, stay safe” executive orders that have forced nonessential businesses to close in order to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The petition, created by John Powell, states, “Recall Governor Whitmer. Her failure’s during the Covid-19 Coronavirus is causing more Michiganders to get sick. Closing and banning various non essential businesses and activities while leaving others open. Further promoting the pandemic.”

She has faced backlash from residents saying she is taking away Michigander’s Constitutional rights.

A Facebook group called “Michigan Against Excessive Quarantine” shows posts from residents speaking against quarantine measures.

#Fixthedamnroads which she has failed to do anything in this regards. The response to #PFAS was negligence and completely removing funding for #PureMichigan clearly shows her lack of anything positive for the State of Michigan.”

Whitmer’s latest executive order prohibits Michiganders from traveling to in-state vacation residences and using motor boats. Large businesses must close areas in the store dedicated to carpeting, flooring, furniture, garden centers, plant nurseries and paint.

New cell tower to be built off Lobdell Road

Information showed gap in Verizon service

By Hannah Ball

A new cell tower is expected to be built off Lobdell Road in Fenton Township in the coming months.

The topic came before the Fenton Township Planning Commission on Feb. 13 for a new communication tower at 6036 Lobdell Rd., parcel #06-31-400-002.

Zoning Administrator Mike Deem said the applicant is Eco-Site on behalf of Verizon, which came to a lease agreement with Charles Mueller to use his property. The Times called Eco-Site, seeking information on when it would be built, and hasn’t yet heard back.

Amy Rodriguez, a representative of Telecad Wireless on behalf of Verizon Wireless, spoke at the public hearing Feb. 13 and reviewed the application.

The proposed monopole is 150 feet tall, located in a 100- by 100-foot lease area. The monopole will be surrounded by a 6-foot-tall fence and landscaping. The Federal Aviation Administration has reviewed the plans and determined that lighting was not necessary. The monopole is setback more than 100 percent of the height of the tower from the property lines.

Deem said the zoning ordinance essentially looks at three factors when reviewing cell towers:
• Is there a need?
• If there is a need, are there alternatives?
• If there are no alternatives, will the tower allow co-locations for additional antennas?

Deem said that the applicant submitted the required information showing that there is a gap in cell service for this area that cannot be met by collocating on existing towers, according to meeting minutes. All existing towers are greater than 1,500 feet from the proposed cell tower and there are no existing structures in the area that would be appropriate to host antennas.

Approval required the tower to accommodate colocating of up to four additional cell antennas.

Treasurer John Tucker said the plan allotted the approximate amount of evergreen trees on the sides and rear of the tower, leaving the front of the tower unscreened. The Planning Commission agreed and believed that additional landscaping on the north side of the entry drive should be required as part of any site plan approval, according to the meeting minutes.

The Planning Commission approved the final site plan with the condition that additional trees be planted on the north side of the access.

Deem said they sent out notices to all properties within 300 feet of the farm for the Feb. 13 meeting and they did not receive any public comment.

The Board of Trustees does not need to approve the tower.

“The Telecommunications Act of 1996 limits a local municipality’s ability to regulate cell towers. Essentially, the Township determines if there is a need and there are no alternative sites on existing towers, the request must be approved,” Deem said.
CDC offers COVID-19 advice on washing hands, door knobs, tables, laundry and more

By Sharon Stone

To slow or prevent the spread of the coronavirus, people are urged to routinely clean frequently touched surfaces, such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets and sinks with household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants that are appropriate for the surface, following label instructions. This advice comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) coronavirus page.

Be sure to follow product labels and follow precautions like wearing gloves and providing good ventilation.

For electronics, consider use of covers that can be wiped clean. If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70-percent alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

In a bedroom/bathroom dedicated for an ill person, consider reducing cleaning frequency to as needed to avoid unnecessary contact with the ill person. As much as possible, an ill person should stay in a specific room and away from other people in their home, following their doctor’s instructions.

Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.

If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer’s instructions and ensure a contact time of at least one minute, and allow proper ventilation during and after application. Prepare a bleach solution by mixing 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.

See DISINFECT on 10

Are you disinfecting surfaces properly?
Hats off to everyone following the COVID-19 guidelines

by Editor Sharon Stone

M y husband, Jeff, and I took our dog for a walk in downtown Fenton on Saturday afternoon. And, yes, we had a plastic bag just in case our dog had to go. It was refreshing to be outdoors and we even caught a whiff of spaghetti cooking at Andiamo for takeout dinners. As we walked downtown, it was sad to see how different things were from just six weeks ago. Every business was closed. It broke my heart as well as infuriating me. I love our downtowns in Fenton, Linden and Holly, and hope that all of these businesses survive this shutdown. My group of empty-nester friends frequent most of the restaurants and shops and pray that every owner and employee has a job to go back to.

We passed others who were out running or walking their own dogs. Everyone was cordial and either crossed the street or made sweeping detours to keep their distance.

Everyone I know is following the rules of social distancing, wearing masks when needed, increased hand washing and shopping for just essentials. I remain concerned, however, that people need to be reminded to maintain proper hygiene. Didn’t people maintain proper hygiene already? I suppose that is a topic idea for another time.

This pandemic has upended the lives of everyone, as we knew it.

On Sunday, we watched a few Easter church services on TV. I Facetimed with my soon-to-be 90-year-old mom who lives just five minutes from me. We also did a video chat with our pregnant daughter, son-in-law and grandson in Fenton, and our son in Miami. We blew kisses to each other.

As a grandma, mom, daughter, sister, and a hugger, I know I am not alone in feeling the frustration of keeping my distance. I read post after post on social media of how families are hurting. I commend all of them for doing the right thing to get through this worldwide pandemic.

Be safe, be smart, read updates on cdc.gov for the latest on the coronavirus guidelines and let’s all get back to work sooner than later.

Sharon Stone is the editor of the Tri-County Times. To contact her, email her at sstone@tcitimes.com or call her at (810) 433-6786.

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How is homeschooling going? What’s the biggest challenge?

“My biggest challenge is that Linden schools haven’t started online learning yet. My daughter only has three teachers doing online work, and it’s not being graded. My daughter is now almost five weeks behind, as is every other student at LHS.”

Elizabeth Bale

Gaines Township

“My challenge is my first grader gets extra help for some subjects. I’ve talked to her teachers and they’ve given me guidance and school work to help her. My fear is she will be further behind. So, will she repeat? Will she be ready?”

Kristy Thiel

Fenton

“My biggest challenge is that I have four kids and different teachers for each kid that want them to Zoom at certain times, which overlaps with other teachers. It’s a struggle. I was doing better without the school telling me what to do and when to do it.”

“‘Our biggest challenge is that Linden schools haven’t started online learning yet. My daughter only has three teachers doing online work, and it’s not being graded. My daughter is now almost five weeks behind, as is every other student at LHS.’

Elizabeth Bale

Gaines Township

“‘It’s got to be ‘new math.’ I know a lot of parents and grandparents that will teach the ‘carry the one’ and ‘borrowing’ because it’s so much easier to understand and not confuse the kids.’

Kris Fleckenstein

Holly

‘My biggest challenge is that I have four kids and different teachers for each kid that want them to Zoom at certain times, which overlaps with other teachers. It’s a struggle. I was doing better without the school telling me what to do and when to do it.’

‘My biggest challenge is my first grader gets extra help for some subjects. I’ve talked to her teachers and they’ve given me guidance and school work to help her. My fear is she will be further behind. So, will she repeat? Will she be ready?’

Hats off to everyone following the COVID-19 guidelines...
Road commission works during pandemic

Facilities closed to the public, workers adhere to COVID-19 guidelines

By Hannah Ball

Because infrastructure is deemed essential, the Genesee County Road Commission (GCRC) continues work on roads, bridges and more during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alexander Patsy, programming and development engineer at the GCRC, said, “That means at a minimum, roads will be maintained, plowed, etc.”

In order to help slow the spread of the coronavirus, certain rules have been implemented for GCRC employees.

Patsy said per direction from the state and our transportation partners, the GCRC is split into two groups, A and B. They alternate working weeks to decrease contact with each other.

“As of right now, all GCRC administered projects, contracted work, etc. are still slated to begin as scheduled, but this may change via directive from the governor,” he said.

The GCRC facilities were closed to the public starting March 16.

Anyone can contact the road commission during its temporary business hours from 7 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, at (810) 767-4920, as well as through email, Facebook or website gcrc.org.

Members of the public may call the GCRC at (810) 767-4920 to obtain a phone number and an access code in order to access the board meeting and bid openings.

If residents have a comment or question, they can email a commissioner or write a letter to the county board. Shumaker said they also could speak during the meeting if they arrange to call in.

“They still have ways they can express themselves during the meeting,” he said. “It’s been different. We have pushed some things back. We’ve all had to adjust.”

Shumaker said the general feel at the county level is concern for residents and county employees.

“But we have a great health officer in John McKellar and we have a wonderful chairman in Marty (Martin Cousineau, commissioner for district 7). I think they’re doing everything they can to just keep the county moving forward. The board is optimistic that we’re going to get through this and come out stronger and better, and seeing what can be done in the future to be more prepared for something like this,” he said.

Shumaker also praised Sheriff Chris Swanson for his efforts in helping to slow the spread during the pandemic.

“I think Sheriff Swanson has done a wonderful job. Chris is definitely a ‘go get them’ type of guy. He’s very qualified. He understands what needs to be done,” he said.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE
Continued from Front Page

and numbers are expected to rise more.

Genesee County declared a state of emergency due to the virus March 13, before any cases were confirmed.

District 6 Commissioner Shaun Shumaker said once they decided to enact the state of emergency, the Board of Commissioners decided who was essential personnel and who was not. Shumaker said that was the toughest part.

District 6 serves residents in the townships of Argentine, Fenton, Grand Blanc and Mundy, as well as the cities of Fenton and Linden.

“We’re trying to keep essential services running for everyone,” he said. For the full list of essential services offered through Genesee County, go to gc4me.com.

The Genesee County Board of Commissioners has suspended in-person meetings and is instead using Zoom.

“It’s strange not being able to go down the hall and have a conversation with a fellow commissioner. Sometimes face-to-face is better. It’s just slowed down the process of trying to get things done,” he said.
While socially distant, music still connects people

Volunteer musicians bring joy and music to local senior living facility

By Tim Jagielo

Fenton — On Thursday, April 2, three volunteer musicians dragged equipment around the various courtyards of Lockwood of Fenton to provide some cheer for the residents while they can’t be visited by their families during the pandemic.

Jamison Jones of Fenton, Elise Bugala of Linden and Brad Wright, choir instructor at Fenton High School and AGS Middle School, performed a mini tour for the residents at this independent senior living facility.

“They were so happy just to hear the music; they love the variety of music they played,” said Debby Runnels, Lockwood life enrichment director.

Wright and Jones played guitar and sang, while Bugala sang and also played keyboard. On that Thursday, the sun was blazing and residents watched from their balconies, clapping along to “Folsom Prison Blues,” and “Take Me Home Country Road.”

The trio played up to six songs at each courtyard. All the residents’ apartments open to a courtyard so they could watch from their various levels. After performing, the musicians moved their equipment with scaffolding and carts. They used a portable public address system for sound.

“They’re huge morale boosters. It gives them something to look forward to,” Runnels said. “It definitely brings a light to their day.”

She had reached out via Facebook to see if anyone would be interested in performing for the residents. Jones, a music instructor and worship leader, responded.

Bugala borrowed scaffolding equipment from her muralist father Gregg Bugala to make it happen.

Like many musicians during this time, Jones misses performing and bringing people together through music. “There is something very special about performing for assisted living residents,” he said. “Many of the individuals are unable to get out much. They deserve the same chance to experience live music.”

Some of the songs were well known to the musicians, while others were not. Bugala looked up the lyrics of “Hallelujah” on her phone so she could perform it upon request. Bugala said she’s a beginning musician and felt called to play for seniors. “It’s just so amazing how music has a way of connecting people even when we have to stay more than 6 feet apart,” she said.

Wright is still working as a teacher from home the best he can.

The trio plans to come back and perform again at the end of April.

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For To-Go or Delivery call us at 810-750-0507. To see our menu, go to www.BealeStSmokehouse.com. There is a nominal fee of $5 for orders delivered within 10 miles of Beale St. Deliveries beyond 10 miles may be higher. Customers can also order deliveries online from Fenton Food Express at fenton.express (check their website for applicable fees). Our hope is that everyone stays healthy during this difficult time. Thanks for being a loyal Beale St. Smokehouse BBQ customer!
TAX DAY
Continued from Front Page

The filing deadline for the 2019 Michigan Individual Income Tax Return MI-1040 has been extended to July 15, according to Michigan.gov/taxes. This includes any tax due or extension payments.

The IRS is processing tax returns and issuing refunds. File your taxes now to get your refund.

According to the IRS, taxpayers can also defer federal income tax payments due April 15 to July 15, without penalties and interest, regardless of the amount owed. This deferment applies to all taxpayers, including individuals, trusts and estates, corporations and other non-corporate tax filers as well as those who pay self-employment tax.

Taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms or call the IRS to qualify for this automatic federal tax filing and payment relief. Individual taxpayers, who need additional time to file beyond the July 15 deadline, can request a filing extension by filing Form 4868 through their tax professional, tax software or using the Free File link on IRS.gov. Businesses who need additional time must file Form 7004.

The IRS urges taxpayers who are due a refund to file as soon as possible. Most tax refunds are still being issued within 21 days.

“Even with the filing deadline extended, we urge taxpayers who are owed refunds to file as soon as possible and file electronically,” said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig.

Breanna Laskowski, owner of Cook Accounting and Tax Services in Fenton, agrees with Rettig about filing now.

Laskowski said 90 percent of tax filers receive refunds. If you are getting a refund, she advises to file your taxes on time and not wait for the July 15 extension.

At Laskowski’s office, they have a locked drop box where clients can drop off their paperwork. This is checked often and everything is being disinfected to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. With face-to-face visits prohibited now, much of their work is done over the phone and email.

While those who expect a refund are advised to file now, Laskowski said those who owe should take advantage of the penalty free extension.

Albert DiNatale of DiNatale Accounting & Tax Services in Fenton echoed Laskowski’s sentiments. He said to file right away if you are getting a refund. He added that he’s getting quite a few calls and questions from his clients, because it’s difficult to get answers right now from the IRS website.

Additional measures included Detroit barring soldiers from entering the city and quarantines of houses where people were infected, the use of face masks throughout the state, limited business hours for commercial establishments, and recommendations for frequent hand washing.

Eventually the pandemic subsided but not before over 25 million Americans had become infected and with over 500,000 deaths including 15,000 Michigan victims.

Obviously, there were many similarities to what’s happening now.

Studies have shown that both early intervention in a pandemic and the timing of the lifting of control measures to prevent reemergence are critical.

Hopefully, what worked in 1918 will work today.
Horoscopes

**ARIES**
Mar 21/Apr 20
Hang on to a source of real empowerment in your career, Aries. It may take willpower and dedication, but you can make it happen when your mind is on the goal.

**TAURUS**
Apr 21/May 21
You can accomplish anything you set your mind to, Taurus. This may even mean being the boss of yourself with self-discipline. Ask friends to help keep you stay the course.

**GEMINI**
May 22/Jun 21
You have the potential to lay the groundwork now for events that will pay dividends throughout the next few years, Gemini. Get a team of trusted advisors on your side.

**CANCER**
Jun 22/Jul 21
Cancer, while others may be focusing on their careers, you understand the importance of zeroing in on your relationships and love life. Keep those your care about close.

**LEO**
Jul 23/Aug 23
Work will dominate the week, but make sure you advocate for fair treatment while you are hard at work, Leo. Check that payment is in full and timely.

**VIRGO**
Aug 24/Sept 22
There will be no surprises for you this week if you simply stay the course with your actions, Virgo. Go about your normal routine and things will work out just fine.

**LIBRA**
Sept 23/Oct 22
Libra, change things at home so you can better care for children or other people in your charge. A lot of progress can still be made if you redirect your attention.

**SCORPIO**
Oct 23/Nov 21
Scorpio, things may be moving quite slowly for you, but that does not mean progress has not been made. You’ll realize after a few weeks how far you’ve come.

**SAGITTARIUS**
Nov 22/Dec 21
Sagittarius, the last few weeks may have come off as humdrum, and that’s probably because you didn’t take any chances. Be more bold in the days to come.

**CAPRICORN**
Dec 22/Jan 20
Capricorn, ask yourself how you want to see your finances grow. Then you can speak with a financial planner and make your dreams a reality.

**AQUARIUS**
Jan 21/Feb 18
Everything that involves you moves up on the priority list, Aquarius. Even though you’re known for putting others first, this all needs to change if you are to progress.

**PISCES**
Feb 19/Mar 20
Pisces, take some time this week to be alone and seek inner peace. During these times of contemplation you can focus on future plans.
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Thank you for every second, every minute, every hour, every day, every week, every month, every year, thank you for everything.

Always our Hero, always the Greatest, always Boss. Always there for us.

Jerry and Patty, you are sadly missed by your entire family and dear friend, Jim.

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**Notice of Error**

It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the correctness of each insertion of an advertisement. The Tri-County Times will not be responsible for more than one incorrect insertion and for only that portion that may have been rendered valueless by an error.
DISINFECT
Continued from Page 3

Soft (porous) surfaces
For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeting, rugs and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.

Linens, clothing, and other items that go in the laundry
Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from an ill person and then discard after each use. If using reusable gloves, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other household purposes. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed. If no gloves are available, wash hands immediately. Do not shake dirty laundry.

Hand hygiene and other preventive measures
Household members should clean hands often, including immediately after removing gloves and after contact with an ill person, by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.

Shoes
Always take off shoes and either leave in garage, or just outside the door of the home.

REAL ESTATE
Continued from Front Page
“We are no longer able to show homes and we’re not able to show properties, so that makes it much harder for buyers to buy a home,” she said. “Sellers are reluctant to put homes on the market because no one can see it.”

As of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s latest orders Friday, April 10, home inspections can take place. If there’s an accepted purchase agreement, then the buyer can go with the inspector to view the property.

“It’s really tough. The governor has been tough on Michigan with this for a good reason, of course,” she said. “It’s had a huge effect on full-time agents making their full income from real estate.”

She said there are agents who are not following state orders, and are having showings anyway. This puts rule-following agents at a disadvantage. They also can’t get photographers to the properties to take photos.

Ray said some agents are doing virtual showings and meetings through Zoom.

“Virtual tours have come a long way. You can navigate the house by yourself. You can even get room measurements while doing it,” she said. “It’s just not the same.”

Ray expressed doubt that many people will buy a house without seeing it in person first.

She expects a “crazy” market once the pandemic is over and the “stay home” order is lifted.

“I have people waiting to put houses on the market,” she said, adding that she’s not sure if home values will go up or down. “Right now, I think the values are stabilizing or will go up a little. It’ll still be a good market for real estate. It will not be near the bust we had in 2007, 2008.”

Ken Brant of Brant & Associates Real Estate in Fenton said he and others in the real estate business were disappointed that they were not considered essential. Despite the Fenton area and its exciting economic growth, those in his industry cannot do too much right now. They are available for questions and guidance to buyers and sellers.

Brant said buyers and sellers who were already in the transaction process can complete that closing process and people can move.

“It will be interesting to see,” he said. “We’re sitting in limbo and supporting our agents.

“It will get really crazy once everyone is healthy and we can maneuver the roads again.

“Buyers will be as excited as ever.”

Brant says listings overall are down 40 percent from a year ago. When things start moving again, it will be a challenge with so many layers, and things beyond their control, affecting the real estate business.

“But, we’re here for them,” he said.

Patrik Welty of Legacy Realty in Fenton said they’re “just about completely stopped” from doing any work at all.

“The only thing legal that we can do is currently stay at home, work from home and handle things electronically,” he said.

“Fortunately, the Governor clarified her executive order to allow other parties who are involved in the transaction to do their jobs.”

That includes home inspectors, appraisers and title insurance companies. They are allowed to complete transactions that began before the pandemic and the “stay home” order.

“The challenging side for both buyers and sellers is that people can’t leave their homes to go look at houses,” he said. “We basically can’t do anything to generate new business in our industry. Our only option is some sort of virtual tour.”

Welty said the majority of the public probably not buy a house based on a virtual tour.

“Essentially, we’re at a standstill. Every aspect of the transaction has been affected,” he said.

Due to the drastic rise in unemployment, Welty said, fewer people will be able to buy a house after the pandemic.

“It’s not going to permanently affect people’s ability to buy or sell their home, but it will delay buyers. We may have introduced a different set of potential sellers for small and medium sized business owners who, because of the dramatic change in economic circumstances, might need to sell assets they didn’t plan on selling,” he said.

Welty anticipates some sort of recession. He also expects to see a decrease in high-end purchases in the real estate market, though affordable options will remain.

“We’re anxiously awaiting the opening of our market so that we can help our customers who need to buy and sell a home,” he said.
Linden’s Kaplan earns four-year scholarship through caddy scholarship program

Compiled by David Troppens

Being a caddy at a golf course like Grand Blanc’s Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club can be a nice way to make some money while enjoying a nice golf course if you are a high school student.

For Linden resident and Powers Catholic High School senior Noah Kaplan it ended up helping his college education more than he may have initially thought.

Kaplan was one of 31 Michigan high school seniors who were awarded the Western Golf Association’s (WGA) Chick Evans Scholarship. The scholarship is a full four-year housing and tuition scholarship and is the nation’s largest privately funded scholarship program.

The Evans Scholarship is valued at an estimated $120,000 over four years. “Each of these deserving Evans Scholars epitomizes what our program has been about since its creation in 1930,” said WGA Chairman Kevin Buggy. “Their dedication, hard work and sacrifice is humbling, and we are honored to be able to help them pursue their dreams.”

Scholarship funds come mostly from contributions by 32,500 golfers across the country, who are members of the Evans Scholars Par Club program.

Shortened season makes rating Winter’s Super Six a challenge

Fenton swimming, Holly wrestling earn spots in top five

By David Troppens

As we prepare to do our annual list of the top prep sports teams during the winter, the sports staff has quite a few challenges.

First off, many of the tri-county area’s top teams didn’t even complete their entire seasons due to the cancellations sparked by the recent COVID-19 epidemic. That kept what were some of our expected best squads from completing their resumes. Other teams did complete their seasons, helping enhance their team credentials. And to make the issue even more challenging was the caliber of our area top teams this winter.

Let’s be honest. This was one of the area’s weakest sports seasons in a very long time. Only two teams won Metro League titles, and almost every other team on this list didn’t finish any higher than mid-standings in the Flint Metro League. Many squads had challenging seasons and were among the bottom teams in league competition.

So, these were some of the winter season’s challenges. How do we rate uncompleted seasons with completed seasons? The sports staff usually likes to go at least eight teams deep, but that’s not going to happen this time. We’ll call this our Super Six. The sports staff fought with having seven, and had a seventh selected, but the drop from six to seven just seemed to be too dramatic to just overlook. The fourth through sixth teams will be evaluated today.

No. 6 - LFLF gymnastics: Last year’s No. 2 team in this poll had a rebuilding season this season, but still had a very strong year. The squad placed second in the Lakes Valley Conference and came just one position from qualifying for the state meet again this winter, placing fourth with a team score of 138.650. With only five performers, the squad had plenty of individual state qualifiers in many events. Unfortunately, the individual state meet was canceled. If it played out, there is a good chance the co-op squad could’ve finished higher in this poll.

No. 5 - Fenton boys swimming and diving: This was one of the toughest teams to rate. The Tigers had a strong regular season, sweeping the Metro League during the dual season. Fenton also crushed at the league meet, earning their ninth straight league crown. The squad also won the county meet and defeated area rival Grand Blanc in a dual meet. The Tigers qualified a lot of swimmers to compete at the D2 state meet as well, so it feels like a top-of-the-poll year.

However, it’s hard to place the Tigers much higher due to the cancellation of the state meet. As it stood, the Tigers had only one member seeded in the top 16 (Max Haney fifth in the 500 freestyle) and only one other (the 200 medley relay in 17th) close to the top 16. Maybe the team would’ve placed higher if the state meet happened, maybe not. We can only go by what data we have.

No. 4 - Holly wrestling: This was another tough one to position. The Bronchos had two individual state champions and that’s impressive. However, from a team standpoint, it’s hard to rate the Bronchos as our best wrestling program in the area. The Bronchos placed second in the Metro League Stripes Division behind Linden. Both teams won a team district title which helped both of their resumes, and the Bronchos actually made it to the regional championship match. However, both teams lost to the same team in the meet and the Bronchos lost to Croswell-Lexington by a 51-21 score, seven points worse than the Eagles.

So when rating the squads, the Bronchos are our second-best wrestling team in this year’s poll.

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