



Bison sweep Hornets in BCS League doubleheader...

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Three Rivers

COMMERCIAL-NEWS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2017

Since 1895 Vol. 123, Issue #117Z 75¢



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Honey, please bee serious

Approximately 25K-30K honeybees extracted from Fabius Township outbuilding

FABIUS TOWNSHIP — Beekeepers Marshall Beachler and Charlotte Hubbard, with assistance from two Chicago-based beekeepers and Fabius Township Trustee Cliff Maxwell, extracted 25,000 to 30,000 honeybees from the outbuilding of Fabius Township Hall, and rehomed them at Corey Lake Orchards in Three Rivers, over the course of two days beginning on Friday, May 12.

"We were made aware of the honeybees in the outbuilding of the Fabius Township Hall last fall," Hubbard said. "Rehoming them then would've likely been fatal; the weather would likely not have allowed them to rebuild what they needed for winter in a new location."

"Township personnel agreed with our plan to attempt a rehoming if they made it through the winter. With about 40 percent overwintering loss of bee colonies in Southwest Michigan, there was a good chance they wouldn't make it."

Beachler and Hubbard, who are

married, have been doing "extractions" or "cut-outs" for "about four years now," helping people in what Hubbard calls untenable situations — "people with fatal allergies to stinging insects, small children or animals playing nearby, and sometimes, even honey leaking into their homes."

Hubbard said the honeybees they extracted on Friday had likely been in the outbuilding for three-to-four years.

"Based on what was discovered within the walls, the beekeepers suspect bees had lived there for three-to-four years, although likely not the same colony," she said. "There was both the current nest, and an older, now unoccupied nest."

Hubbard said last weekend's extraction was the cleanest removal she and Beachler have ever done.

"There was very little honey as it is still early in spring build-up, and the bees were stunningly gentle. Based on the amount of developing brood, the population was within a few weeks of growing sizably toward its summer peak of about 50,000."

Hubbard said she and her husband have removed honeybees from a dormitory, an apartment complex,

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Honeybee extraction

Above, Beekeeper Marshall Beachler (left) works on locating a swarm of bees at the original Fabius Township Hall, now an outbuilding, while Beekeeper Charlotte Hubbard watches on Friday, May 12 in Three Rivers. Right, Hubbard estimates that between 25,000 and 30,000 bees were safely extracted from the outbuilding and rehomed to Corey Lake Orchards over the course of two days. Pictured is a section of the wall the crew removed during the extraction.

Commercial-News/Alek Frost



Intermediate School District Board discusses CTE millage

Considering up to two CTE centers

By Samantha May Staff Writer

CENTREVILLE — Tommy Cameron, director of Career and

Technical Education, gave the ISD Board of Education a presentation Monday on the voters' view of a potential CTE millage.

Cameron said CTE hired EPIC-MRA to perform a survey to evaluate voters' attitude on a CTE millage proposal, and whether there should be one or two new CTE centers, as well as

where they should be built.

"We wanted to learn some specific questions; what are the attitudes towards the CTE millage in this county, what about this question of one or two centers? What would be supported, what would not be supported?" Cameron said.

"And a lot of people said how are we

suppose to do this? It will never get past Glen Oaks, everyone thinks Glen Oaks should've done this years ago, and it won't pass because they didn't do it. OK, let's find out if that's true or not."

The survey was conducted by asking a representative number of people from each school district. For example, Cameron said that Sturgis represents a

quarter of the county's population, so the survey evaluated 25 percent.

According to the results, 57 percent supported one technical center as opposed to two. Cameron said one center would cost \$15-\$18 million, and two centers would cost double the price, around \$30-\$33 million.

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City inks wastewater agreement with Constantine

Approved by village last week

By Elena Meadows

THREE RIVERS — The Three



Poppy proclamation

Three Rivers mayor Tom Lowry accepts the first poppy of the season from American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Chairman Carol Newman during the Three Rivers city commission meeting Tuesday, May 16. For decades, the American Legion Auxiliary has sponsored Poppy Day to remind America that millions have sacrificed their lives and health to keep the nation strong and free. Lowry read a proclamation proclaiming May 18-20 as Poppy Days in Three Rivers and encouraging citizens to support the Hice-Shutes Post #170 Legion and its Auxiliary in its sale of poppies during that period; the Legion uses the money raised to bring veterans from the Battle Creek VA to the post several times a year for lunch and activities, as well as to help local veterans and their families.

Photo provided by Elena Meadows

Rivers city commission on Tuesday, May 16, approved a 25-year wastewater treatment services agreement with the village of Constantine. This model shifts the operating costs to a "biggest user pays the most" scenario.

"This agreement provides a long-

term, sustainable and cost-effective solution for both communities as long as each community upholds their respective obligations," City Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) superintendent Doug Humbert told commissioners.

The Constantine Village Council approved the agreement last week by a 5-2 vote. Three Rivers' vote was 6-0, with commissioner Norm Stutesman absent.

The agreement comes after more than four years of negotiation as the expiration date of a 20-year contract arrived.

Humbert presented about the history of the situation and about the compromises necessary to make a new agreement a reality.

The background: •In 1995 and 1996 Constantine was having difficulty with its contractually operated WWTP. •Engineering analysis revealed that the best long-term solution was to partner with Three Rivers and send village wastewater to the city WWTP for treatment.

•On July 8, 1996, the city and village

See WASTEWATER AGREEMENT, page 3

Embattled White House lurches from crisis to crisis

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump personally appealed to FBI Director James Comey to abandon the bureau's investigation into National Security Adviser Michael Flynn, according to notes Comey wrote after the meeting.

The White House issued a furious denial after the notes were disclosed late Tuesday, near the end of a tumultuous day spent beating back potentially disastrous news reports from dawn to dusk.

The bombshell Comey news came as the beleaguered administration was still struggling mightily to explain Monday's revelation that the president had disclosed highly classified information to the Russian foreign minister and the country's ambassador to the United States.

Defending Trump's actions, officials played down the importance and secrecy of the information, which had been supplied by Israel under an intelligence-sharing agreement, and Trump himself said he had "an absolute right" as president to share "facts pertaining to terrorism" and

airline safety with Russia. Yet U.S. allies and some members of Congress expressed concern bordering on alarm.

As for Comey, whom Trump fired last week, the FBI director wrote in a memo after a February meeting at the White House that the new president had asked him to shut down the FBI's investigation of Flynn and his Russian contacts, said a person who had read the memo. The Flynn investigation was part of a broader probe into Russian interference in last year's presidential election.

Comey's memo, an apparent effort to create a paper trail of his contacts with the White House, would be the clearest evidence to date that the president has tried to influence the investigation.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Republican chairman of the House oversight committee, sent a letter to the FBI on Tuesday requesting that it turn over all documents and recordings that detail communications between Comey and Trump. He said he would give the FBI

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PLEASE BEE SERIOUS

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porches, garages and several older homes, a service they provide for free.

"Simply killing honeybees in a structure doesn't eliminate the problem," Hubbard said. "There's usually a massive build-up of honey and wax in their nest. Once the bees are killed off and unable to defend the nest, what's left behind will attract rodents and other insects."

"And unless the cavity is cleaned out and sealed off, it will be attractive to future swarms looking for a home. Plus, the world needs honey bees."

Hubbard and Beachler manage two to three dozen colonies, and mentor other beekeepers on

sustainable beekeeping. Hubbard speaks and trains nationally on honeybees, and has written two books about bees, including an informative children's book.

Some of the couple's colonies are located at Corey Lake Orchards, where the bees from Friday's extraction were transported. Hubbard said Corey Lake's operation is largely dependent "on pollinators for most of the fruits and vegetables they raise," so "they were happy to give (the bees) a new home."

The extraction process began Friday with locating the nest through the walls of the original Fabius Township Hall, now an outbuilding, which was

accomplished with a heat-detecting gun, a service provided by Fabius-Park Fire and Rescue

"Fabius Township administrative personnel were 'bee-yond' fabulous in helping everything go smoothly," Hubbard said. "The fire department, with their heat-detecting gun, located the nest through the walls to minimize the deconstruction."

Bees were then accessed from the interior, to minimize deconstruction, according to Hubbard.

"The process consists of opening the cavity, trying to find the queen bee — the only bee who lays fertilized eggs that turn

into the critical worker bees — then ever so carefully cutting out the honeycomb and brood, and placing it into special frames, and then vacuuming up the thousands flying around and in this case, hanging out at the windows trying to escape.

"While the queen bee was never spotted, the colony's 'behavior' suggests she was in the clusters of bees put into the special frames, or captured by the vacuum. As of Saturday, the 'newbees' were at Corey Lake Orchards, bringing pollen and nectar into their new home. We provided them sugar water to aid in their expedient repair of the comb damaged by removal."



'Wholly appropriate'

President Donald Trump listens as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington, Tuesday, May 16, 2017. The White House on Tuesday defended President Donald Trump's disclosure of classified information to senior Russian officials as "wholly appropriate," as Trump tried to beat back criticism from fellow Republicans and calm international allies increasingly wary about sharing their secrets with the new president.

AP Photo/Evan Vucci

EMBATTLED WHITE HOUSE

Continued from page 1

a week and then "if we need a subpoena, we'll do it."

The panel's top Democrat, Elijah Cummings of Maryland, a constant Trump critic, called the allegation of Trump pressure on Comey "explosive" and said "it appears like a textbook case of criminal obstruction of justice."

John McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said late Tuesday that the developments had reached "Watergate size and scale."

Mitch McConnell, the Republican leader of the Senate, said simply, "It would be helpful to have less drama emanating from the White House."

The person who described the Comey memo to the AP was not authorized to discuss it by name and spoke on condition of anonymity. The existence of the memo was first reported Tuesday by The New York Times.

The White House vigorously denied it all. "While the president has repeatedly expressed his view that General Flynn is a decent man who served and protected our country, the president has never asked Mr. Comey or anyone else to end any investigation, including any investigation involving General Flynn," a White House statement said.

Trump fired Flynn on Feb. 13, on grounds that he had misled Vice President Mike Pence and other officials about his contacts with Russians.

The intensifying drama comes as Trump is set to embark Friday on his first foreign trip, which had been optimistically viewed by some aides as an opportunity to reset an administration floundering under an inexperienced president.

When Trump fired Comey, he said he did so based on Comey's very public handling of the Hillary Clinton email probe and how it affected his leadership of the FBI. But the White House has provided differing accounts of the firing. And lawmakers have alleged that the sudden ouster was an attempt to stifle the bureau's investigation into Trump associates' ties to Russia's meddling in the campaign.

Mark Warner of Virginia, top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, said he would ask Comey for additional material as part of that panel's

investigation. "Memos, transcripts, tapes — the list keeps getting longer," he said.

According to the Times, Comey wrote in the February memo that Trump told him Flynn had done nothing wrong. Comey said he replied that "I agree he is a good guy" but said nothing to Trump about limiting the investigation.

The newspaper said Comey was in the Oval Office that day with other national security officials for a terrorism threat briefing. When that ended, Trump asked everyone to leave except Comey, and he eventually turned the conversation to Flynn.

The administration spent the first half of Tuesday defending Trump's disclosure of classified information to senior Russian officials. National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster said the president's comments were "wholly appropriate." He used that phrase nine times in his briefing to reporters.

The White House has grown suspicious about the volume and timing of the seemingly never-ending stream of leaks about the president, said one senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity to reflect on the feeling inside the West Wing. The official questioned why — if Comey had concerns about his conversations with the president — the FBI director hadn't shared them with the deputy director, the Department of Justice and Congress at the time.

The highly classified information about an Islamic State plot was collected by Israel, a crucial source of intelligence and close partner in the fight against some of the America's fiercest threats in the Middle East. Trump's disclosure of the information threatened to fray that partnership and piled pressure on the White House to explain the apparently on-the-spot decision to reveal the information to Russian diplomats in the Oval Office.

A U.S. official who confirmed the disclosure to The Associated Press said the revelation potentially put the source at risk.

In a statement, Israel's ambassador to the U.S., Ron Dermer, said the partnership between the U.S. and Israel was solid.

WASTEWATER AGREEMENT

Continued from page 1

entered into a 20-year Sewer Services Agreement.

•A seven-mile-long, pressurized sewage forcemain was constructed along US-131, King Road and Gleason Road.

•The first wastewater came to the city WWTP on Feb. 16, 1998.

•Today, the village discharges to the city WWTP about 30 percent total flow and 40-50 percent of the daily load/strength.

The road to compromise:

•In November 2012, negotiations began for a new city/village wastewater treatment services agreement.

•The village received an engineering feasibility study that suggested it could build and operate its own plant for lower cost (residential rate) than the rate currently being paid to the city.

•The village felt that it was being overcharged by the city because the 1996 agreement

included the city collection system cost.

•The village wanted a seven-year term on a new agreement.

•Major village industry wanted increased hydraulic treatment capacity beyond that available in the 1996 agreement.

•The city argued that the volume and strength of wastewater was being misjudged by the village's engineering firm and that construction and operating/maintenance costs were understated for either rebuilding the existing or building a new village WWTP.

•The city wanted the village to take over responsibility for the forcemain, and wanted a 40-year agreement with the village.

•The city wanted the village to pay its fair share, including forcemain operation/maintenance, Capital Improvement Project, electricity; WWTP fixed and variable costs, expansion costs, industrial

pretreatment program and other state mandated program costs.

The final agreement:

•After several financial disclosures and discussions, the city hired a contractor to establish rate setting and model/methodology which assigns separate costs to in-city and out-of-city WWTP users. This model appropriately shifts operating costs to largest system users.

•It stipulates that forcemain operation/maintenance and CIP costs belong to the village.

•It establishes a six-member (three from the city, three from the village) advisory board which meets quarterly to help guide operation/maintenance, CIP, expansion, rates, etc.

•Village industry/industries receive(s) needed treatment capacity as long as they pay for any necessary expansion(s).

•It offers the village reliable wastewater treatment (there has only been one unscheduled

service interruption over the past 19-plus years).

•The city receives long-term sustainability by securing the village as a customer for the next 25 years and steady WWTP revenues.

•The city retains full control of the industrial pretreatment program and other state mandated programs.

•It establishes a mediation board to resolve outstanding issues should negotiating parties reach an impasse during the next negotiations; if neither party feels the need to negotiate, it renews for five years.

"It seems like a really good relationship with the two communities," commissioner Carolyn McNary said.

There will be more on Tuesday's meeting in Thursday's paper.

Elena Meadows is a former Commercial-News managing editor who still enjoys contributing to the paper.

ISD DISCUSSES CTE MILLAGE

Continued from page 1

In regard to building the technical center in Glen Oaks Community College, just over half of those polled said they have no preference where the center should be built, with 38 percent in support of Glen Oaks and 7 percent in denial.

Cameron said in order for the millage to pass, everyone should be an effective communicator.

"The executive summary from EPIC-MRA said the scaled back version, the one center version, clearly has a potential of earning voters' support, however, only if there is an effective communications plan," Cameron said. "If there is a communications plan, everyone in this room is going to have to be part of that. We don't have dollars to be spent on putting on a big media blitz. We're all going to have to be grassroots in support of something like this."

Vice President Elizabeth O'Dell said she has concerns because of a previous millage. O'Dell said a few years ago, the Board asked for millage to fund for the schools' special education programs, at

the same time the Board was remodeling their building. Therefore, citizens were confused.

"Let's go back to history, we, as a Board, did a wrong millage for everyone and it went down. We had to ask those school districts to pay for that, and then we had to run it again because they wanted it a second time. So somebody paid twice for something to be passed," O'Dell said.

"It seems to me that we try to pass these things without fully educating the voters, and voters don't understand what is coming forward. I am a little concerned about what our strategies are for communication."

Cameron said that although he is informing the Board on the proposal, it is up to the superintendents of the local school districts to carry out the information to the voters.

"We have been telling the superintendent from day one, this is your millage, this is not the ISD's millage, if you want it to pass, you're going to have to get involved in this," Cameron said.

The suggested millage estimated for one center would cost 2.7 mills, approximately \$5.8 million a year for 15 years. Cameron said that puts us in the middle of counties already with the millage proposal in place.

"We are trying to find the reasonable ask. When we look at what the other counties around us are asking for and are getting, this kind of puts us in the middle of all of them," Cameron said.

In order for the CTE Millage proposal to be present on the November ballot, the vote needs to be passed during the ISD Board meeting in July, Cameron said.

"We are going to make the vote to a very specific purpose, that is to both construct and operate a career and technical operation center, or centers," Cameron said.

In other business, the Board...
•Approved St. Joseph County Great Start Readiness Program Agreement between St. Joseph ISD and Colon Community School District, Oct. 1, 2017 through Sept. 30, 2018.

•Applied for the Great Start

Readiness Program Grant for \$2,671,625. GSRP ensures opportunities for four-year-old children to attend preschool that may be out of reach for families struggling with income.

•Applied for the Trusted Advisors Grant through the Great Start Collaborative for \$60,000. The money would be used to pay key Parent Leaders to train and support other facilitators running playgroups with evidence-based practices.

•Approved to use St. Joseph County Schools Information Services Consortium funds to purchase, install and configure a new firewall for a cost of \$65,530.

•Applied for the Early On Mini Grant of \$1,650 to train parents on speech and language techniques.

•Approved the CTE Consortium to use \$43,250 worth of funds in order to pay for the CTE greenhouse project in Centreville based on a quote from Stuppy Greenhouse.

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