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March 21, 2020
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THE LATEST NEWS ON CORONAVIRUS IN OAKLAND COUNTY

BE RESILIENT

Rep. Stevens: "Have faith. Have hope. Your congresswoman is working for you. She will not let you fail and we are going to do everything we can to see our community through this crisis and on the other side stronger, resolved, and better for it."

by ANDREW NEAL

U.S. Congresswoman Haley Stevens (MI-11) spoke with the Gazette Friday to provide an update on the national response to the coronavirus pandemic.

"We're in an unprecedented moment," Rep. Stevens said. "We are working to expand testing and availability of medical care to everyone in the state. The governor is doing a fabulous job clearly communicating the executive orders of the state at this time to secure the health and safety of all Michiganders."

Last week, Rep. Stevens voted in favor of providing cash assistance of \$1,000 to Americans to help stem the financial strain brought on by the crisis.

The congresswoman also echoed advice on how every person can help prevent the spread of the virus.

"We are encouraging everybody to social distance to stop the spread: stay six feet apart, not be in large gatherings, wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands, and check in on your loved ones."

Michigan has barred guests from visiting senior living centers in order to help prevent the spread of coronavirus to those that are most vulnerable to suffering from severe health issues.

"Certainly, what's in place with our nursing homes and senior living centers is a dramatic change for many families," Stevens said. "And so we're finding new ways to connect with loved ones. Make sure that they have everything they need in those living places."

Rumors circulated widely this week that Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer was considering implementing a state-wide

lockdown or "shelter in place" order, but the governor has been vocally refuting those rumors.

"I am taking the information from the governor when members of the public get it and I'm amplifying the message that she shared yesterday, which is that she's not considering shelter in place at this time," Stevens said.

One executive order the governor did implement last week was the closing of all bars and restaurants with the exception of take-out orders. The governor has issued 14 executive orders relating to COVID-19 including banning gatherings of more than 50 people, expanding unemployment insurance and child care, and extending the deadline for delinquent property taxes.

The order to close public gathering places has left many Michiganders out of work.

See COVID-19 on page 2

Pressing pause: Troy-Somerset Gazette goes digital

EDITOR'S NOTE

by ANDREW NEAL

The COVID-19 coronavirus has affected us all. Those who have been infected, those who are practicing social distancing, the healthcare workers on the front lines, the employees who are out of work, life as we know it has shifted. And we're no different here at the Gazette.

That's why after this week's print edition, we're shifting to an all-digital news source to better serve the community.

The editorial team will be working from home, bringing you regular updates and weekly digital editions of the newspaper.

For 40 years, our newspaper has relied entirely on businesses and advertisers. As we all know, those businesses are closed for the time being. We have no choice but to adapt to this new reality. Now, we need your help. In order to support the editorial team, we are asking for your donation.

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Thank you for your support. Our intention is to continue with print publications when this crisis is over.

To advertise on our digital platforms, email Advertising@GazetteMediaGroup.com.

On a personal note, I want to thank the readers of the Troy-Somerset Gazette for supporting local journalism. We will do everything we can to continue to be a voice for this community.

I also want to thank the Gazette's founder Claire Weber, Publisher Mark Nicholson, City Editor Cynthia Kmett, Creative Director AJ White, Sales Executive Pam Brown, and every person who has been a part of the Gazette team over the years. The businesses and advertisers who have contributed to our decades of success, thank you.

The weeks ahead will be unnerving, and no one knows what the future holds. Nevertheless, be resilient.

Nothing will ever stop I-75 construction

Crews closed both directions of Big Beaver Road under I-75 on Friday for bridge demolition that carries southbound I-75 over the local road.

Traffic on the freeway will not be impacted. It will impact both directions of Big Beaver Road under I-75. This work started Friday night and will end by 5 a.m. on Monday, March 23.

The plan is to reopen Big Beaver Road by 5 a.m. Monday, March 23. However, there will be a left lane closure in place on both bounds of Big Beaver Road under

I-75 until April 20. Two lanes in each direction on Big Beaver Road will remain open.

On Monday, March 23 at 7 a.m. the entrance ramp from 14 Mile Road to northbound I-75 will close until Wednesday, April 22.

The alternate route for westbound 14 Mile Road to northbound I-75 is west on 14 Mile Road, north on Crooks Road, to northbound I-75. The alternate route for eastbound 14 Mile Road is north John R Road, to west on Big Beaver Road, to north on Crooks Road, to northbound I-75.

Rep. Stevens offers update on COVID-19 national response

COVID-19 from page 1

When asked what the government is doing to help people and businesses stem the financial strain caused by this crisis, Rep. Stevens pointed to unemployment insurance, SBA loans, and cash assistance.

"My message to everybody and every business is: we're not going to let you fail. We're not going to let you fail as individuals, medically or financially. And we're not going to let the economic fabric of our society and our state unravel as a result of this pandemic."

"I'm taking bipartisan steps to ensure that no individual is left behind financially at this time," Rep. Stevens said.

As we enter ominous weeks ahead, our healthcare system will be put to the test. Hospital beds, personal protective equipment (PPE), testing supplies, healthy

workers, and other essentials will be in short supply. Stevens shares the concern of most Americans on whether our healthcare infrastructure will be able to handle the burden of this pandemic.

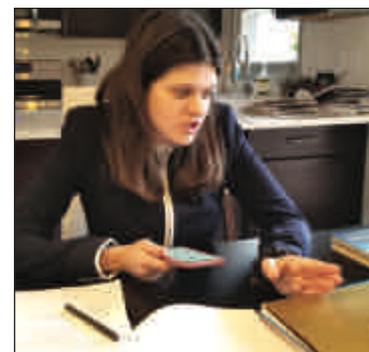
"I am concerned about the needs being met. And I am working cohesively with my colleagues in the Congress, particularly in the Michigan delegation, to ensure that needs are met and that testing is expanded," Stevens said.

"I believe that we are going to use the full weight of our government to ensure that needs are met."

"And I'm also working with the executive branch and requesting assistance from them as well."

Congresswoman Stevens also wants people in the 11th District – which includes Troy, Rochester Hills, Birmingham, and Bloomfield Hills – to know that she wants to hear from you.

"We are encouraging everybody to share experiences and their needs."



U.S. Congresswoman Haley Stevens on tele-conference with mayors and supervisors. Photo via Twitter.com/RepHaleyStevens

"And so I have been putting out regular calls for people to do fill out a form on my website and social media to share what they are going through medically or financially or what's on their mind."

"We will get through this."

"Focus on the positive. Take a minute, every single day to engage in something that makes you happy, makes you laugh. Connect with people, as much as you can over technology and through practicing social distancing. Have faith. Have hope. Your congresswoman is working for you. She will not let you fail and we are going to do everything we can to see our community through this crisis and on the other side, stronger, resolved, and better for it."

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County offers text updates for residents on COVID-19

Oakland County residents interested in receiving the latest updates on the coronavirus can receive them by text, County Executive David Coulter announced this week.

Interested residents should text OAKGOV to 28748 for the latest information on COVID-19 from the Oakland County Health Division and other county agencies.

"We want our residents to stay current with important information as it becomes available," Coulter said. "This gives them another tool to help keep them and their family safe during this public health emergency."

The Health Division's Nurse on Call telephone service, 800-848-5533, offers information regarding communicable diseases. Inquiries are also taken at noc@oakgov.com.

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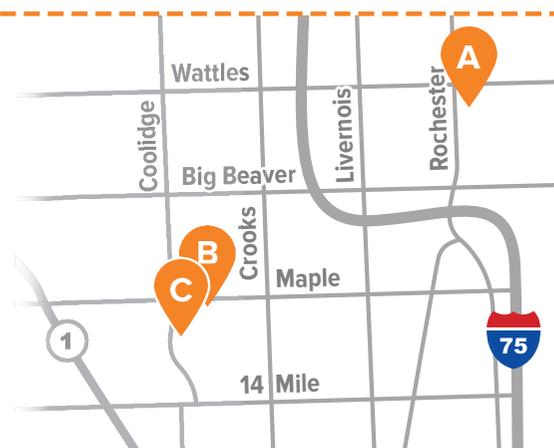
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Troy settles lawsuits on billboards

by CYNTHIA KMETT

After exhausting all its legal options, the City of Troy decided to settle the lawsuits over three disputed billboards that Crossroads wanted to put up on Maple at Crooks, Livernois at Maple and Maple at Dequindre.

While the city issued the permits back in 2017, which were allowed under the city's then-current sign ordinance, when residents saw three lighted billboards go up on Rochester Road, there were cries of "not in my neighborhood" heard loud and long.

The city instituted a 180-day moratorium on the signs, which they extended while writing a new sign ordinance. When construction hadn't started, the city rescinded the sign permits.

Crossroads sued Troy in Federal court, claiming constitutional violations and, by the way the permits had been legally issued.

A number of legal moves followed, with the city losing. So, if they tried to appeal to the Court of Appeals in the federal court, the city might lose \$850,000. Since it

was quite a lot of cash, settlement talks were started with Crossroads, with Troy agreeing to pay \$80,000 in legal fees and Crossroads to get two billboards on Maple.

While no one on council liked the idea, they didn't want to risk almost a million dollars and voted to settle.

In other business, City Council awarded a contract to provide a new contract for janitorial services for three years with the option to renew for three additional 3-year periods to NA Facilities Management of Ann Arbor, as a result of a best-value evaluation process for an estimated annual amount of \$759,192 in year one, \$770,460 in year two and, \$781,896 in year three for Proposal A.

One thing the committee looking at the nine bids made for the job of keeping Troy facilities clean was that this company cleaned hospital and knows exactly how to keep things clean and safe.

It passed unanimously.

Small aircraft "cartwheels" off runway



It was Tuesday evening just before 6:30 when the call came in and the Troy Fire Department from Station 3 responded to a report of an airplane that had apparently flipped over, off of the runway, at Oakland Troy Airport on Industrial Drive.

The airport is a county-operated, unstaffed facility. This means there are no crash rescue services on-site and no staffed control tower facilities. The incident was called into the 9-1-1 center by a passerby.

Upon their arrival, firefighters

confirmed that the pilot had exited the craft, and there was no fire and no fuel leaking. The single-engine aircraft had sustained obvious damage.

The pilot indicated that he was enjoying his aircraft, with no indication of any malfunctions. When he attempted to land, the plane made an abrupt turn into the grassy area alongside the runway and partially cart-wheeled to a stop, but did not flip over. Upon entering the grassy area, the plane then became stuck in the soft earth. The aircraft appeared

to have damage to the propeller, both wingtips, and the landing gear. The pilot also reported a minor injury to his hand. Firefighters requested Oakland County Air Traffic Control to close the airport until the plane could be removed.

The incident was turned over to Troy Police and the FAA for investigation. Damage estimates are incomplete at this time. No serious injuries or fatalities were reported.



Last Monday, the Troy Fire Department was dispatched to a vehicle extrication at the scene of a traffic crash involving a rolled over vehicle on Northbound I-75, north of 14 Mile Road. Upon arrival, firefighters found a Chevrolet Volt on its side, with one occupant still inside. Firefighters used the Jaws of Life and hydraulic cutters to remove the roof of the vehicle. Once removed, the patient was treated by Alliance Mobile Health and transported to a local hospital. Her condition is not known. Troy Police are investigating the accident and its cause. No other injuries or fatalities were reported. Photo courtesy of the Troy Fire Department

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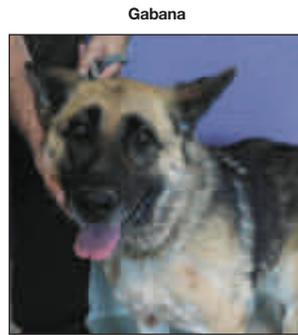
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The Gazette creates and curates hyper-local content and distributes free weekly
newspapers throughout businesses in the community. Go to GetYourGazette.com to read
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3	7	4	9					
9				3		2		7
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CHN offers COVID-19 mental health tips

As public health officials strategically plan to protect the physical wellbeing of individuals during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) challenge, Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) is encouraging people to also take care of their mental health.

The agency is offering the following suggestions to reduce COVID-19 related anxiety and stress.

While important to stay informed about changing events regarding COVID-19, OCHN mental health experts are encouraging people to take a break from news coverage. This is especially true if watching the news is causing additional stress and anxiety, or interfering with participation in daily activities.

Parents should have age-appropriate conversations with children about changes in their lives because of COVID-19. This includes school closings and the cancellation of extracurricular activities. It is important to reassure them that these actions are meant to keep them safe and are temporary. Kids also need to know that once determined safe by health experts, they will return to school and their normal routines. Parents whose children are experiencing persistent and

overwhelming stress from the COVID-19 situation should contact OCHN's Crisis Helpline at 800-231-1127, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They can also contact a healthcare provider.

Avoiding large gatherings of people does not mean avoiding people completely. Check in on neighbors, especially those who are elderly or live alone. Develop a neighborhood community outreach plan to offer support where needed and to those who need it most. This could include assisting working parents with childcare issues because of school closings.

Social distancing can cause people to feel lonely and isolated. Make a conscious effort to stay connected with friends, family members, and loved ones. Phone calls, texting, and social media allow people to stay close from wherever they are. Letter writing is another option to stay in touch.

People who are experiencing persistent and overwhelming fear and stress from the COVID-19 situation should contact the OCHN's Crisis Helpline at 800-231-1127, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They can also contact a healthcare provider.



Shed fire at Motor City Church sends columns of black smoke

At 3:40 p.m. on Friday, March 13, the Troy Fire Department was dispatched to a "shed fire" on the property of the Motor City Church, located at 3668 Livernois. Numerous 9-1-1 callers began reporting the fire when a very large column of black smoke could be seen rising from behind the church.

The large (approximately 100'

x 60') storage building was entirely engulfed in flames.

Using an overhaul strategy similar to the Belle Tire incident, an excavator was requested from the Troy DPW. What was left of the roof and walls of the garage had collapsed, prohibiting water streams from reaching the remaining fire.

Firefighters operated for just

over 2.5 hours. The building is a total loss. The church was occupied, and was operating a daycare at the time of the fire. But neither the day care, nor the occupants of the church, were threatened by the fire.

No injuries or fatalities were reported. The fire remains under investigation.

Cancellation of TCC spring concert

Due to the recent developments concerning the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), the Troy Community Chorus is canceling the spring concert originally scheduled for Sunday, April 26 at Athens High School.

Considering all the available information, including the CDC guidelines, the Board reached the

decision that this course of action is in the best interests of members, patrons, and community.

TCC would like to thank director Jonathan Lowrie, accompanist Min Sook Chung, and all members for their dedication and hard work this season.

Samaritas to hire dozens during crisis

Samaritas, the nonprofit human services organization with sites across Michigan's lower peninsula, has announced it is actively recruiting, with plans to hire up to 33 new employees in Southeast Michigan, and more than double that statewide, immediately.

The hiring plan includes employees to work with residents served at Samaritas' senior living communities, as well as in-home work with seniors and individuals with disabilities. Most open positions do not require certifications.

While many of these openings were available before widespread guidelines to minimize exposure to the coronavirus, the organization has additional

employment needs, because for now, following health guidelines, Samaritas is not allowing visitors at its senior living communities. With in-person family support limited within Samaritas' communities and for those in which they provide in-home care, Samaritas has increased staffing needs, including for food delivery and caregiving, that must be provided without congregating in commons areas, requiring more one-to-one attention.

In Southeast Michigan, Samaritas locations with employment openings include Detroit, Bloomfield Hills, Monroe, and Troy.

For more information, visit Samaritas.org/About-Samaritas/Samaritas-Careers/.

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