



COMMERCIAL-NEWS | ROBERT TOMLINSON

**Dan Fredricks, vice president and project manager at Land and Resource Engineering, presents on the findings of an engineering study on the Corey Lake Intercounty Drain during a public hearing Wednesday at the Fabius Township Hall.**

## Drainage Board moves forward with Corey Lake Intercounty Drain project

By Robert Tomlinson  
 Staff Writer

**FABIUS TOWNSHIP** — The Corey Lake Intercounty Drain Drainage Board took the next step toward providing improvements and maintenance on the drain and deemed a potential project to do so a necessity during a public hearing at the Fabius Township Hall Wednesday.

Residents of both Fabius and Newberg Townships that would be in the drain area filled the township hall for the meeting, where the board also approved

revising drainage district boundaries, approved that both townships would receive an “at large assessment for benefit to public health,” and authorized the board chair to sign a first order of determination.

The board is comprised of St. Joseph County Drain Commissioner Jeff Wenzel, Cass County Drain Commissioner Bruce Campbell, and Christine Kosmowski from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, who, as chairperson, does not vote on motions unless there is a

tie. Kosmowski gave the crowd a rundown on the timeline of what has happened with the drain so far. She said a petition was received by the St. Joseph County Drain Commissioner’s Office in July from 18 freeholders requesting maintaining and improving the intercounty drain to address drainage issues in Fabius Township, Newberg Township and St. Joseph County. On Aug. 20, the board determined it was practicable to investigate issues in the drainage district area.

See DRAIN PROJECT, page 2

## There’s no stopping the Fabulous Four

By William A. Baltz  
 Special to the Commercial-News

**THREE RIVERS** - Jodie Walker, Tammy Shuler, Kathy Griffin and Bridget Griffioen. Four dynamic Women on the Go. They may be on the smaller side in physical stature—but are ginormous in athletic abilities, drive and perseverance.

These are not fair weather women, either. They train in the cold and dark, in the snow and rain. Indeed, it’s downright tough to stop them.

When Kathy, Tammy and I were on the return leg of a 60-mile

bike ride last summer, Kathy hit a pothole causing a flat rear tire. Tammy, always far in front—like a scout leading the troops—circled back. “No problem,” she said, getting out tools from her fanny pack—a compact little store that, amazingly, contains every item under the sun one needs to keep going—from ointments for wound care to a metric hex key set.

She quickly removed the wheel on Kathy’s bike, carefully pried off the tire, and replaced the damaged tube with a new one. “Good to go,” she said matter of factly.

Without further ado, Tammy mounted her bike and resumed

the lead position.

Meanwhile, Jodie continued to train for a marathon while dealing with a painful foot condition called plantar fasciitis. “What am I supposed to do—I have a race coming up. I can’t just stop training.”

The other three were coping with some sort of physical malady as well: Bridget spent much of the summer recovering from an IT band injury; Tammy suffered torn glute and hamstring tendons; and Kathy crashed her bike causing a gash on her leg—this on top of ongoing arthritis, and residual effects from ankle, knee and hip surgeries.

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PHOTO PROVIDED

**The Fabulous Four: (L-R) Jodie Walker, Bridget Griffioen, Tammy Shuler and Kathy Griffin.**



PHOTO PROVIDED

**They are tough to stop. During a 60-mile ride, Kathy’s bike gets a flat tire. Tammy breaks out her tools and in a matter of minutes we are on our way again.**

## Road Commission approves 2020 health insurance rates

By Robert Tomlinson  
 Staff Writer

**CENTREVILLE** — The St. Joseph County Road Commission board approved a resolution for Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance rates for 2020 during their regular meeting Wednesday.

Road Commission Managing Director John Lindsey said the road commission was “hit hard” with the rates this year, which he said were a 15 percent increase “across the board” from their 2019 rates.

Lindsey said it was “close” on how the rates affected employee’s Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), that he talked with road commission employees and offered them a choice of an 80/20 provision or a hard cap provision. Lindsey said the road commission has

been on a hard cap for a couple of years, and had done 80/20 “once or twice.”

“The problem was, I couldn’t give them a clear direction, because it depended on who was going to stay in the HSA and who was going to move to a PPO,” Lindsey said. “We sent them home the weekend before Thanksgiving, to look it over, discuss it, ask any questions, and come back and vote on Tuesday at quitting time.”

Lindsey said the majority vote by the employees was to go with an 80/20 provision, which Lindsey explained means the board picks up 80 percent of the policy, and the employee picks up the remaining 20 percent of the cost. Lindsey said it was “quite the conversation” with the employees, and said there was “good conversation.”

Commissioner Rodney Chupp said it’s good that employees made the decision.

“I think if the switch was going to be made, I think it’s good that they got to vote, and that they chose to switch,” Chupp said. “It’ll give you a year of experience, and if people aren’t happy with it, the next year, they’ll know and want to go back. Maybe it’s a good thing to try something different.”

Lindsey said three employees opted out from the company insurance, adding that some employees have asked to consider some other insurance than Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The resolution was unanimously passed, 4-0. Commissioner Vince Mifsud was not in attendance at Wednesday’s meeting.

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## Triathlons take skill, endurance and no small measure of courage

By William A. Baltz  
 Special to the Commercial-News

Ask anyone who has competed in a triathlon the most challenging leg of the race and chances are they will tell you the swim, especially if it’s 2.4-miles—the Ironman requirement—in a choppy ocean where any number of sea creatures might be lurking.

“There’s a big difference between swimming in a nice, comfy lap pool and an open-water swim,” says HealthTrac personal trainer Kerry McClain, an accomplished triathlete and experienced swim instructor. “In a lake, river or ocean, there are no marked lanes, no walls to rest on, no ropes to calm the waters, no controlled environment or heated pool. In the open, the water might be cold and murky with waves splashing in your face and washing down your throat, and you might get kicked hard by other swimmers. Sure, there may be lifeguards around in kayaks—but that’s little comfort when you’re 50 yards off shore in 20 feet of rough water. Plus, you’re in a race—the pressure is on. It has all the ingredients for a first-rate panic attack.”

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