

U.P. MUST-SEE

Roadside attractions await in Upper Peninsula, C1



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- Early apples
- Hospital merger the cure?
- Libertarian candidate dies

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 2010

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TWO TEAMS JOIN GVSU IN GLIAC, B1



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WARMER SEASON BRINGS EARLY APPLE CROP

Smaller harvest than last year

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Don't wait too long for those crisp days of fall for apple picking. The apple season is 10 days to two weeks ahead of normal — and about three weeks ahead

of last year when cool temperatures had things lagging. And the end of peach picking is in sight, while plum and pear harvesting is underway.

Fennville peach farmer Bill Wadsworth is finished with his first two varieties and figures his third will be finished the first week of September.

In addition to being early — some

Paula Red and Empire are already being picked — this year's apple harvest is projected to be significantly smaller than last year's.

Two warm spells in April got the crops started early, explained Michigan State University Extension fruit educator Mark Longstroth, but then damp spring weather caused problems with fruit set in areas of Allegan, Kent

and Ottawa counties.

The damage was very localized by plot and variety, so the bottom line isn't known, but the Frozen Food Packers Association Fruit Crop Guesstimate puts the state crop at about 9 million bushels fewer than last year's 23.2 million bushel estimate.

Go to Business&Finance, page B5, for more about fruit crops.



Dennis R.J. Geppert/The Holland Sentinel
The end of peach picking is in sight.

HOSPITAL MERGER

The cure for what ails them?

BY LISA ERMAK | lisa.ermak@hollandsentinel.com | (616) 546-4219

As Zeeland Community Hospital and Spectrum Health explore a merger, many questions are still left unanswered for the public. Most important may be: What does a merger between two hospitals mean for the community?

To boil it down to the basics, a business merger occurs when two organizations mutually agree to form a single new entity.

Dr. Sridhar Sundaram, chair of finance at Grand Valley State University, said the two biggest advantages of mergers are new market opportunities and reductions in the cost of operations.

Hospital mergers aren't anything new to Michigan. Former competitors Mercy General — part of Trinity Health — and Hackley Hospital in Muskegon came together in 2008 to form Mercy Health Partners. The move was orchestrated to enhance the level of care for the public and to help Hackley Hospital continue to thrive under the umbrella of a larger health care provider. Trinity Health has 46 hospitals across the United States.

Roger Spoelman, CEO of Mercy Health Partners, said there was no exchange of money, rather Trinity and Mercy Health Partners took over the liabilities of Hackley Hospital.

Stronger as one

Spoelman said merger talks came about when he and former Hackley Hospital CEO Gordon Mudler began a dialogue about what would be best for the community.

"Even though we were conditioned to hate each other, we figured if we were spending money competing with each other maybe that money would be better spent together," Spoelman said. And so, Mercy Health Partners' tagline, "Stronger as one" was born.

While better health care opportunities for the community is incentive for two hospitals to merge, so is the need to reduce costs and streamline services, especially during an economic downturn.

"Any hospital that is currently in need of a partner, they need a partner for a reason. It's very difficult for a smaller hospital to make it all on its own," said Mark Pawlak, vice president of Ancillary

See **HOSPITALS, A2**

Residents react

Do you think a merger between Spectrum Health and Zeeland Community Hospital is a good idea?



"I'm not against something with Spectrum, but I would love to see the two hospitals (Holland and Zeeland) come to some agreement. Hospital administrators are very protective of their own identity and somehow you got to get past that." — **Bob DeBruin, Mt. Pleasant**



"I think it's a good idea. Merging a bigger hospital with a smaller hospital gives people from the community better health care." — **Larry Quarry, Holland**



"I think it's a good idea. I had surgery last year at Spectrum and there are so many specialists down there." — **Kathleen McAughey, Park Township**



"No. Spectrum is big enough, and I don't like big hospitals." — **Jackie Mieras, Grand Rapids**

Libertarian candidate dies following July stroke

BY PETER DAINING
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Rich Hemstreet, the Libertarian candidate for the 2nd Congressional District, died Monday from complications related to a July 26 stroke.

Hemstreet, 58, of Tallmadge Township, was a writer and editor of hobby magazines.

Emily Salvette, chairwoman of the Libertarian State Party, said Hemstreet's wife Debbie has been strong and helpful through the process of picking a new candidate. His funeral was Thursday at Grand Valley Baptist Church.

The Libertarian Party has paperwork filed to replace Hemstreet on the November ballot with Joseph Gillette, a businessman who lives outside the 2nd Congressional District in Lyons, a small village in Ionia County.

"It's late in the race and Rich Hemstreet was running a very active campaign when he had his stroke," she said. "We will miss him a lot, but I know Jay will do a good job too."

After Hemstreet's stroke, doctors diagnosed him with locked-in syndrome, which is the result of damage to the lower brain and brain stem, while the rest of the brain is spared.

Even though Hemstreet was paralyzed and could only communicate through blinking his eyes, he was still committed to his family and to politics, his wife Debbie said in an interview in early August.



Hemstreet

"Even though we were conditioned to hate each other, we figured if we were spending money competing with each other maybe that money would be better spent together."

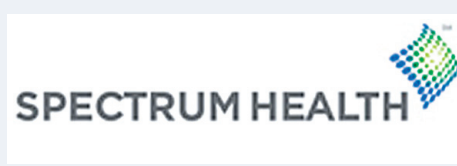
ROGER SPOELMAN
CEO of Mercy Health Partners



Zeeland Community Hospital has struggled with occupancy in a small market and would like to partner with a larger health care provider.



Holland Hospital is urging Zeeland to reconsider a merger with Holland Hospital to keep medical services local.



Spectrum Health has been pursuing a merger with Zeeland Community Hospital.

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- ◆ Holland Hospital staff walk for cancer awareness, **A3**.

SPORTS

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- ◆ Roush crash shows teams must plan for catastrophe, **B4**.



DEATHS

- Martin Boetsma, 91
- Doug Doezema, 62
- Glen Eding, 84
- Katherine Hopkins, 92
- John Johnson, 47
- Jean Latchaw, 77
- Joseph Otting, 99
- Evelyn Porter, 85
- Betty Walker, 75

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