

# LMC funds upgrades for dorm

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## BENTON TOWNSHIP

— Lake Michigan's student housing complex is due for security and infrastructure upgrades even as construction continues on the project.

LMC board members voted Tuesday to proceed with the improvements, which are being funded by about \$634,000 in savings netted from other recent capital projects — such as the Mendel Center roof replacement, President Bob Harrison said.

“As part of the project, we're making some changes to the surrounding areas. With the addition of the soccer field, and its adjacency to the student housing, we want to do some enhancements for student recreation there,” he said.

LMC broke ground in July for the 200-unit complex, which is going up on the west side of its Napier Avenue campus.

The enhancements include security lighting, walkways and electrical connections to that part of the campus, “which has never had utilities before,” Harrison said. “We're adding that now.”

LMC is developing the project with Student Suites of Independence, Mo., which helps two-year community colleges design student housing.

The total estimated cost is \$8 million, which the college is financing through bonds that will be repaid from student housing fees

over 30 years.

Hollis & Miller Architects is overseeing the design, which will include a beach volleyball court, courtyard, Frisbee golf course, lounges and study spaces.

The infrastructure improvements' completion should coincide with that of the complex — tentatively, by July of next year, Harrison said.

“As part of the housing project, they'll (Student Suites) make changes in line with what the board decided to do,” Harrison said. “We're really excited. This will add value, not only to the students residing in the housing, but also to our other commuter students.”

In other matters, the board approved one-year health insurance plan renewals with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan for non-faculty members, and Michigan Educational Special Services for faculty members, Harrison said.

MESSA is administered by Blue Cross, but is primarily aimed at the educational market, he said.

Tuesday's action followed a request for insurance proposals, which the college reviewed with Ballard Benefit Works of East Lansing, Harrison said.

In renewing the plans, the board adopted an 80-20 percentage split — which means that the college picks up the former portion, and employees, the latter, Harrison said.

“We have to identify it as

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a hard cap, or an 80-20 (split). Historically, we look at which methodology softens the impact on employees,” Harrison said. “This year, it was the 80-20 model.”

The board’s action affects between 200 and 220 full-time non-faculty employees, and about 50 full-time faculty employees, said Harrison, who didn’t recall the exact numbers.

Both packages are high-deductible plans, Harrison said. The term refers to a combination of low premiums and high deductibles,

which buyers use to control health care costs.

“With the Affordable Care Act, the face of health insurance is changing significantly, and this is probably the last year where it’ll be relatively straightforward,” Harrison said.

The board appointed Michael Knytych of South Haven to the LMC Foundation Board of Directors for a three-year term, effective July 1, Harrison said.

Knytych and his wife, Susan, own several McDonald’s restaurants, including in Bangor, Benton Township, Coloma, New Buffalo and South Haven.