

Progress made on Blue Star bike trail

By TRIBUNE STAFF

More than 100 supporters of the Blue Star Trail, including U.S. Rep. Fred Upton and State

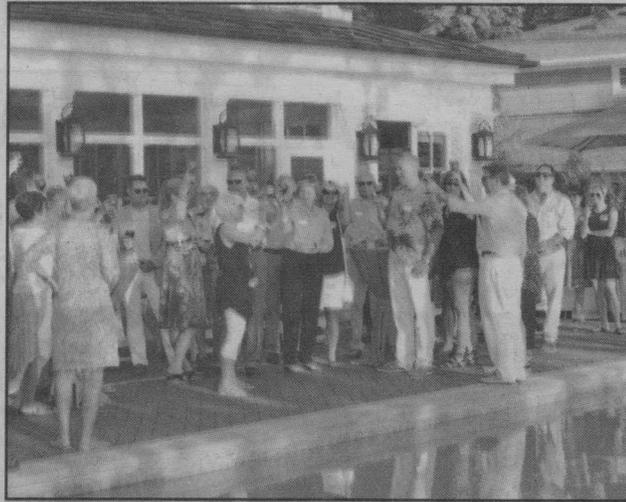
Rep. Mary Whiteford, gathered on June 20 at the lakefront home of Jan and Dave Ryder, Fennville to raise money for the proposed bike path along Blue Star Highway.

The funds that were raised at the event will help to secure dollars for the next two phases of construction.

Co-chairs Cathy Carmichael and Lauri Sullivan, along with Blue Star Board President Jeanne Van Zoeren and artist Cynthia McKean, toasted the progress of the Trail.

When completed the trail will be a paved, 20-mile recreational pathway that will connect South Haven to Saugatuck along Blue Star Highway. It can be used year-round for cycling, running, walking, skiing and snowshoeing. The trail will cost an estimated \$5 million to complete. Approximately \$1 million has been raised so far, according to Van Zoeren.

Parts of the trail completed to date include .3 miles in Casco Township,



Contributed photo

Supporters of the Blue Star Trail take part in a gathering to raise funds for the continued construction of the 20-mile recreation path that will extend from South Haven to Saugatuck.

When completed the trail will be a paved, 20-mile recreational pathway connecting South Haven to Saugatuck.

approximately .8 miles in Douglas, and 1.7 miles of existing trailway in Saugatuck. The next section to be completed is miles of trailway scheduled for construction this coming fall in Saugatuck Township. It will start at North Street and proceed along the west side of Blue Star Highway to Maple Avenue.

After that project is complete, the Friends of Blue Star Trail hope to extend the trail from the Interstate 196 Douglas interchange (exit 36) to M-89 Highway to complete the Saugatuck

Township portion of the trailway in 2017.

In the meantime, the Blue Star Board will continue to work in Casco Township to obtain signed easements for construction of the trail there, according to Van Zoeren.

Cynthia McKean of Saugatuck, who was in attendance at the gathering, created a memorial plaque for major donors to the Blue Star Trail. She is well known for her work as a sculptor in steel. Her work can be seen in public spaces in Saugatuck, Douglas, South Haven, and Grand Rapids, as well as in ArtPrize for the last four years.

Friends of the Blue Star Trail is an all volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. More than 100 area citizens, corporations, and foundations have been supporting the Trail project by providing professional expertise and/or fundraising assistance.