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Marine Division to patrol four Commerce lakes

by Lisa Brody

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Homeowners on four lakes in Commerce Township have decided to privately contract with the Oakland County Sheriff's Department Marine Division to patrol their lakes this summer.

The Commerce Township Board of Trustees agreed to allow residents to pay for the Sheriff's Department Marine Division patrols on township lakes this summer, but won't contribute toward the cost of such patrols.

Residents of the four lakes, Lake Sherwood, Commerce Lake, Lower Straits Lake, and Long Lake, have to pay \$31.18 for each Sheriff's deputy they have on Marine Patrol. Patrols will be on duty primarily on weekends and holidays. A schedule has been worked out with the Oakland County Sheriff's Department Commerce Substation.

Due to revenue shortfalls and budget cuts, Commerce Township won't be able to pay for Marine Division patrols on various township lakes. Many other lakes area municipalities have also cut Marine Division patrols from their budgets this summer.

The Marine Division had previously patrolled area lakes as a public safety service to regularly monitor boat usage, make sure there is no excessive alcohol consumption on the open waterways, and be certain there's help available due to any kind of mishap or calamity. In order for local municipalities to maintain this kind of service on local lakes, riparian property owners and those with access to lakes will have to contract and pay for the Marine Division patrols.

Three of the four Commerce lakes, Lake Sherwood, Commerce Lake, and Long Lake, have requested Marine Patrols for their fireworks displays. According to the Commerce Township clerk's office, each lake will have to pay a \$50 permit fee for the fireworks display, plus coverage for the entire day and evening from the Marine Patrol.

Commerce Lake and Lake Sherwood are private lakes with no public access. Long Lake does have limited public access.