

Gros Cap School Eyes Millage Renewal for Upkeep

School Board To Decide in January If Issue Will Go to Voters in May

By Paul Gingras

Plans to replace 22 windows at Gros Cap School are completed, and school board members are looking ahead to prepare for other repairs to the facility to make it more energy efficient. In January, the school board plans to place a millage renewal on the ballot to pay for future upkeep. The sinking

fund renewal would go on the May 2 election ballot.

The 1.75 mills will generate \$130,000 a year for the next three years.

Essentially, the school is operated on two budgets, said Superintendent Bill Peltier. One budget is based on non-homestead property taxes, which provide money for

operational costs, such as teachers' salaries and maintenance, but construction projects like window replacement and other physical upgrades must come from the Sinking Fund, which can't be used

for operational needs.

The Sinking Fund, Mr. Peltier said, is critical for the survival of the Gros Cap School because state reductions in funding make it impossible for the school to pay

for construction projects with operational money.

Money from the current Sinking Fund is being used to replace the school's leaky windows, making the building more heat effi-

cient, which saves money that can be spent on education.

The new millage is needed to upgrade the school's electrical system, remove an old, underground

*Please turn to page 11

City Extends ORV Use

Riders Can Use Streets After Dusk; Council Tables Decision on Replacing Policeman

By Ryan Schlehner

Police staffing may need to be adjusted soon as Officer Ryan Diehl may be deployed to Iraq to train new Iraqi police officers.

The St. Ignace City Council, at its regular meeting Monday, December 19, tabled discussion on finding a replacement for Mr. Diehl during his year-long absence until he knows whether he will be called to duty. He is undergoing training in a special military program that allows municipal police to help the U.S. military train new Iraqi government and security forces. If he goes to Iraq, it will be toward the end of January, he believes.

Mayor Pro Tempore Don Gustafson, at a public safety committee meeting Monday, December 12, said he does not want the city to be liable for unemployment costs for a temporary replacement during Mr. Diehl's absence. He said the police union contract says a temporary employee cannot work more than 105 days a year.

Councilman Paul Grondin said he would like to keep the police staff to a minimum of six officers,

including the police chief.

Mr. Diehl can return to the department after one year, however, his pay and benefits will be frozen during his absence.

Police Chief Tim Matelski told the committee that Officer Bruce Bigger Sr. is planning to retire in July, which could allow the temporary officer filling in for Mr. Diehl to be added to the staff permanently.

St. Ignace's ORV Season Extended

Seasonal use of off-road vehicles (ORVs) in the City of St. Ignace has been extended another month into the fall and ORV users can now drive on city streets after dusk. Council adopted changes to its ORV ordinance December 19 to allow local ORV groups to attract and retain tourists.

The ORV season in St. Ignace begins April 15 and now ends at the end of November, instead of the end of October. ORV users can operate their vehicles at night if properly equipped with headlights

*Please turn to page 10

Strong Writing Push in Plans for St. Ignace School Students

School Board Discusses Bowling Program, Considers Superintendent Consolidation

By Paul Gingras

LaSalle High School band students played jazz at the opening of the St. Ignace Area School board meeting Monday, December 12, providing a holiday treat for board and audience members. Main topics at the meeting dealt with the bowling team, the possibility of changing the status of school superintendents, and a strong push to improve the writing curriculum on all levels in St. Ignace.

The band played for 15 minutes; then the board got down to business.

The board adopted a resolution to name Gateway Lanes of St. Ignace its bowling team's official location. This team is a school-sponsored varsity organization under the leadership of Coach Terri Allan.

Use of the alley will cost \$1,500 for the season for two nights of practice per week and will cover one Saturday league tournament. The school does not fund this, however. Parents and the team are responsible for expenses.

The decision to declare Gateway Lanes as the home location was made at the recommendation of the Community Resource Committee.

Bowling has been allowed as an official school sport under the umbrella of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) for the past three years, Mr. Springsteen said.

Several years ago, he added, students and parents approached the school administration and requested that bowling be made a recognized sport at St. Ignace Area Schools. School board members agreed to sponsor it. By doing so,

students can earn a varsity letter for their achievements, and the school provides a volunteer coach.

Owing to budget cuts, which also affected baseball, softball, and dance, the school is not able to pay coaches for any of these teams, but team members have raised money to keep their sports going, and volunteers have held the organizations together.

Student bowlers have to follow school rules governing sports activities, Mr. Springsteen said. At the end of the year, bowlers can take part in an MHSAA tournament. Only school-sponsored sports can do so.

Before becoming an official school sport, bowling was already a club activity for some students, Mr. Springsteen said.

The board meeting revealed that school systems are still trying to find ways to cut costs, this time at the administrative level. On Monday, the board considered a letter sent by Pete Everson, superintendent at the Intermediate School District, about having schools in the Eastern Upper Peninsula share superintendents.

This could affect districts such as St. Ignace Area Schools, Rudyard Area Schools, Gros Cap School, and others in the region, Mr. Springsteen said.

The idea was prompted by the actions of downstate districts such as Glen Lake Community Schools and Suttons Bay Public Schools, which now share a superintendent.

Mr. Springsteen said he is unsure how successful these districts are, so at this stage, the local school boards interested in the possibility of sharing a superintendent.

*Please turn to page 10



Young Skaters Enjoy Party at Little Bear

Top: About 20 children and their parents from the Tribe's St. Ignace Head Start class enjoyed ice skating at Little Bear East. Their teacher is Terri Allan.

At left: Four-year-old Victoria Geldner of St. Ignace contemplates her Christmas wish list with Santa Claus during a Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Christmas party for the Head Start class at Little Bear East Arena and Community Center Thursday, December 22. The class also enjoyed lunch.



Local Foresters Win Awards for Quality Work

By Paul Gingras

The staff of the St. Ignace U.S. Forest Service office hosted a potluck meal for local winners of three prestigious awards Monday, December 19. The awards were presented by Regional Forester Randy Moore, who represents Region 9, the northeastern third of the United States. Hundreds were nominated from 15 National Forests within 20 states for quality work in their regions.

Steve Christiansen, District Ranger for the Hiawatha National Forest, said the awards went to individuals for heroism, excellent resource work, and stewardship in working on outdoor projects.

"These are highly coveted awards," he said, "which are given not only to Forest Service workers, but also to our cooperators."

The awards were presented in Milwaukee on December 1.

Collaborative Aquatic Resource Stewardship Award: Jimmie Miller, Louie Colegrove, Bill Kemeny, Jon Reattoir, Chuck Bassett

Jimmie Miller, Louie Colegrove, Bill Kemeny, Jon Reattoir, and Chuck Bassett were presented with a plaque for several projects on Brevort Lake in Mackinac County.

The Brevort Lake Association was honored for initiating, conducting, and managing the cormorant control project to deal with the increased population of Double-

Crested Cormorants. The birds are thought to be a major factor in the decline of the fishery. Members of the association have been rewarded for dissuading large flocks of the birds from landing on the water during the spring fish spawning season.

The award also acknowledged the role of the East Unit of the Hiawatha for leading and supervising periodic fish surveys on Brevort Lake. The data and history associated with these surveys was instrumental in obtaining permission to conduct the cormorant control program.

The Brevort Lake Association also constructed fish habitat cribs on Brevort Lake and worked in association with the East Unit of the Hiawatha National Forest and the Straits Area Sportsmen's Club on the project. The East Unit workers provided guidance, technical expertise, and obtained permits for the construction of the cribs. Jon Reattoir provided the design and logs.

The Sportsmen's Club also hosted Annual Kids' Fishing Day. To facilitate the event, the group arranged for trout to be stocked in ponds. Members also provided volunteer help for the event and gave prizes.

Kids' Fishing Day took place Saturday, June 11, this year at Castle Rock Ponds in St. Ignace. Kids were introduced to fishing in two ways: by dropping lines into a

1,500-gallon holding tank loaded with fish, or by fishing on a designated trout pond.

Members of the Hiawatha National Forest, East Unit helped support kids fishing day by providing supervision, obtaining permits, gathering volunteer help, supplying materials, and offering information via handouts.

Kari Stanley, recreation planner for the Forest Service was considered instrumental in organizing and running the event, which she said was designed to bring "the joy of the outdoors" to children.

The Collaborative Aquatic Resource Stewardship Award also acknowledged the Sportsmen's Club and the Lake Association for work distributing rock along a reef

on Brevort Lake.

Workers grouped the rocks, forming a long string which allowed them to stretch the material as far as possible. The purpose was to increase habitat to enhance fish spawning in the area.

Members of the Forest Service, the Brevort Lake Association, and the Straits Area Sportsmen's club praised each other for their mutual efforts.

"We're proud of the work the Forest Service does," Mr. Christiansen said "but we wouldn't get much of this work done without the help of these local organizations."

Sportsmen and residents did much of the groundwork under the technical direction of Forest Ser-

HOLIDAY HOURS and DEADLINE CHANGES

The St. Ignace News Offices

The St. Ignace News offices in St. Ignace and Hessel will be closed Monday, January 2 in observation of the Holiday Season.

JANUARY 5 ISSUE

DISPLAY ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Thursday, December 29, 5 p.m.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Friday, December 30, 1 p.m.

The St. Ignace News office in St. Ignace will reopen at 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, January 3.