

# St. Ignace City Council Approves 2006 Budget

\*Continued from page 1

and taillights. ORVs are allowed to be used during the winter months, however, only for plowing driveways.

The Sportsmen's Off-Road Vehicle Association, led by Steve DuFresne of St. Ignace, is working to establish ORV use in St. Ignace to promote fall tourism, offering poker runs and recreational driving, similar to how snowmobiling is promoted in the area. Extending the ORV season and allowing nighttime use will allow more opportunities for tourism growth, said Mr. DuFresne, who said the ORV recreational sport is growing.

The ORV association is hoping to connect to Hiawatha National Forest's network of trails from Trout Lake to Hessel, soon to be completed.

## Heckman Says Good-bye

City Manager Gary "Pete" Heckman thanked the community and Council after he announced Monday's meeting was his last as city manager. He received a proclamation from Mayor Pro Tempore Don Gustafson for his 29 years of service.

"Thank you all for bearing with me and me bearing with you," he said at the meeting.

City attorney Prentiss M. Brown, Jr. praised Mr. Heckman's dedication and professional attitude throughout his years of service.

"Pete is an example of a good city manager," said Mr. Brown. "He was easy to deal with, he always had a smile, and he was never a bragger or a boaster. We're going to miss him. It was a privilege and honor to work with him."

Eric Dodson, a 1991 LaSalle High School graduate, has been hired as the city's new manager and will begin work Tuesday, January 3. Mr. Heckman will continue to train Mr. Dodson and act as an unofficial advisor while Mr. Dodson adjusts to the new job.

## City's 2006 Budget Approved

Council adopted the city's 2006 budget after holding a brief hearing for public comment just before the regular meeting Monday evening. There was no discussion during the hearing.

The 2006 general fund budget is for \$2,116,860, up from \$2,037,000 this year. The city collects \$1,346,000 from property taxes, levying 16.26 mills on a taxable value of \$82,779,830.



St. Ignace City Manager Gary Heckman (middle) attended his last city meeting as manager Monday, December 19. He received a proclamation from Mayor Pro Tempore Don Gustafson (left) and city attorney Prentiss M. Brown (right) for his 29 years of service to the city.



Ryan Diehl

Approximately \$1,120,000 of the levy is placed in the city's general fund, \$152,680 goes to the Downtown Development Authority, and \$73,400 funds the city's recreation program.

## Nostalgia Productions Agreement Postponed

Council postponed any action to remove language from an agreement with Nostalgia Productions that allows the city to review Ed Reavie's events budgets. Council members say they want to be able to request a budget from Mr. Reavie, even though the city no longer contributes money to his company, Nostalgia Productions, which produces the St. Ignace Auto Show, Truck Show, and On The Waterfront antique automobile show.

Mr. Reavie is asking that the clause be removed from the

agreement. Mr. Gustafson said the issue was not brought up at the city's Special Events Committee meeting two months ago. And, while the city only contributes in-kind services, he said asking for a budget report is an option the city would like to keep.

Because Mr. Reavie did not attend the meeting and could not elaborate on his request to remove the accounting language from the agreement, the discussion was tabled.

## Fire Department Receives Ice Rescue Suits

Council was informed that two ice rescue suits were donated to the fire department by U.S. Coast Guard Station St. Ignace. Coast Guard rescue technicians will train firefighters in their use for near-shore ice rescues.

## City Committee Appointments

Councilman Tom Della-Moretta, the board's newest member, was appointed by Mr. Gustafson to take former Councilman Ollie Boynton's place on the Real Estate Committee. Mr. Boynton was also on several other city committees, however, Mr. Gustafson said he will leave those appointments for the new mayor, to be elected in February.

Council also agreed to re-appoint Margaret Peacock to the St. Ignace Library Board and appointed former mayor Bruce Dodson to the St. Ignace Harbor Authority as a citizen-at-large member.

City committee terms are for five years.

# Board Agrees To Study Superintendent Sharing

\*Continued from page 1

sibility of sharing a superintendent must do some studying.

Historically, Mr. Springsteen added, school systems have been combining to cut costs, but at this point, most schools that wish to combine have already done so. Many schools do not want to combine any further, he said, because they want to maintain their own identities.

By combining, some schools were able to offer students a broader base of programs, to use fewer buildings, and to require fewer principals and other administrators.

Superintendent sharing, Mr. Springsteen said, could be a way of reducing costs without further school consolidations.

If enough school boards in the area are interested in this, Mr. Springsteen said, they will have a meeting for board members to assess information concerning school systems that currently share superintendents. They will use this information to determine if these arrangements have generally had a positive or negative effect.

Following deliberations, the school board agreed to further study the possibility of sharing superintendents among Eastern Upper Peninsula schools.

Of \$16,500 received from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, about \$6,500 will support the baseball and softball teams, Mr. Springsteen said. The rest will go toward maintaining the position of Student/Family Advocate for the elementary and middle schools. This position, occupied by Deanna Kreski, is much like that of a guidance counselor. She works to resolve problems for students and parents. The Tribe has donated \$20,000 toward her salary for the past 10 years, Mr. Springsteen added, which has been a great benefit to the younger students, 50 percent of whom are Native American.

The St. Ignace district is heavily

involved in programs to improve student writing. All students in grades eight to 12 wrote an essay on the theme of "choices." Each essay was examined by two teachers, given a score, and that score was averaged. In cases where the teachers' opinions varied drastically, a third person assessed the essay.

The information gained from this, Mr. Springsteen said, will be used to help redesign the writing curriculum.

"It's easy to departmentalize things and make the English teachers responsible for all the writing, but that isn't our strategy," he said. "All classes have increased the amount of writing required by students."

"It's true that English teachers will remain responsible for teaching writing, and every English class has a writing component," he said, "but writing is used in all areas."

There are no classes that are purely "composition" based, though, with the exception of half semesters of certain high school courses, Mr. Springsteen said.

Part of the initiative to improve student writing has to do with the district's need to maintain its accreditation with North Central Accreditation. In a study of strengths and weaknesses, the district determined that it could improve in reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

At first, Mr. Springsteen said, the district attempted to tackle all areas at once.

"That was just too much," he said. "We were getting too spread out, so we decided to focus hard on one area this year: writing."

At the end of the 2006 school

year, teachers, administrators, and staff will examine the effectiveness of the new writing strategies. Mr. Springsteen said by then, components to improve student writing should be in place, and can be kept in motion. Next year, the schools will focus harder on other areas in the curriculum that need improvement.

# Coast Guard: Ice Is Not Safe

Recent warm, wet weather has made Michigan's already thin ice dangerously thinner, prompting the U.S. Coast Guard to issue an ice safety reminder to Great Lakes residents Friday, December 23.

A common guideline for recreational ice use is at least three inches of ice to support one person and a minimum of 12 inches to support a vehicle, the Coast Guard reported.

The Coast Guard has issued the following recommendations for using ice safely once it is thick enough: Never go onto the ice alone. Always wear a life jacket; additional safety equipment includes ice picks and rope. Carry a portable marine radio; cell phones do not replace marine radios altogether, which are the most effective method for coordinating a rescue. Carry pyrotechnic distress signals such as red flares or orange smoke devices.

Last year, 79 lives were reported saved or assisted and eight lives were lost on Great Lakes ice. The Coast Guard spent more than \$500,000 flying helicopters for more than 90 hours during ice rescues in 2004.

## Book Sales To Benefit Rudyard Education

A new book by Larry P. Flanders of Trout Lake has been published and will be available at local book stores in January. The collection of stories and poems is about life in Michigan's north country and is called "Alive and Free in the EUP."

Mr. Flanders, a retired teacher who worked at Rudyard High School and Lake Superior State University, has published many individual stories, articles, and essays.

Proceeds from the book will benefit the Rudyard Area Education Foundation.

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