

5-Year Plan OK'd To Improve County Roads Using State, Federal Funds

By Karen Gould

A plan to improve Mackinac County roads, using funds from both the state and federal governments totaling more than \$2.6 million over the next five years, was approved by Mackinac County Road Commissioners following a public hearing on the proposed project list Tuesday, March 7. Commissioners noted that the projects they approved to undertake in the years ahead are subject to the funding they actually receive.

The major goal of the commission's repair program is to eliminate road areas that become impassable, which are especially problematic in the spring, explained Lester Livermore, commission chairman. He said the commission would have to remain flexible on the project list because funding is not a certainty.

Craig Kelso, road commission engineer and manager, agreed. He explained that this year,

Mackinac County was faced with a 22 percent reduction in funds when federal dollars were diverted to Gulf Coast states to help rebuild the area following two hurricanes that damaged the region.

Funding comes from the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, also known as TEA-LU. The Act provides federal funding for transportation safety programs.

For Mackinac County, the loss in federal dollars creates a competitive atmosphere over what projects will get done, Mr. Kelso noted.

For example, he explained that Chippewa County is going to pave from M-48 southerly to Town Line Road in Mackinac County. At the county line, Town Line Road is gravel and to eliminate the gravel stretch, the road commission is scheduling to surface it in 2007. This means plans for repairs to H-40 in Hudson Township may have

to be pushed back until funding becomes available.

Hudson Township Supervisor Al Garavaglia said he wanted the six-mile stretch of H-40 repaired in 2007. The sides of the road have deteriorated, he explained. During Tuesday's meeting, he and Mr. Kelso agreed to work together to seek grant money for the project.

As this discussion was taking place in St. Ignace, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Governor Jennifer

Granholm released information about a bill that is being drafted. The proposed legislation would speed up state transportation projects through short-term and long-term grants.

The bill, which still must pass the legislature before being signed by the governor, is being sponsored by State Senator Mike Prusi from the 38th District in the western Upper Peninsula.

In another matter, the road commission approved a contract with

MDOT to resurface with chip seal one mile of Town Line Road at a total cost of \$90,500. The county's portion would be \$18,100 and the federal contribution for the project totals \$72,400.

Five year road projects include: In 2007, Three Mile Road in Marquette Township, Charles Moran Road in Brevort Township, Swede Road in Clark Township, Sandtown Road in Garfield Township, Krause Road in Garfield Township, Town Line

Road in Marquette Township, and Black Point Road in Brevort Township.

In 2008, Three Mile Road in Marquette Township, Charles Moran Road in Brevort and St. Ignace Township, Sandtown Road in Garfield Township, Krause Road in Garfield Township, H-40 in Hudson Township, and Black Point Road in Brevort Township.

In 2009, Sandtown Road in Portage Township, H-40 in Garfield Township, Black Point Road in Brevort Township, Three Mile Road in Marquette Township, Swede Road in Clark Township, and South Curtis Road in Portage Township.

*Please turn to page 14

Tribal Election To Be Focus of Thurs. Meeting at Sault

Members of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and potential candidates for tribal representative seats are invited to attend an informational meeting Thursday, March 16, at 7 p.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at the Kewadin Casino in Sault Ste. Marie. The meeting will offer an opportunity to obtain information about the upcoming tribal election that will choose representatives to the tribe's board of directors.

Candidates have until March 24 to file a letter of intent to run for office. A list of eligible candidates will be released by the tribe April 20. The primary election date is May 18, and the general election day will be June 22.

Primary ballots will be mailed to voters April 27, with general election ballots to be mailed June 1.

Six board seats are up for election, including two seats in Unit 1, one seat in Unit 2, one seat in Unit 3, one seat in Unit 4, and one seat in Unit 5. The tribe's seven county service area, which includes Mackinac, Chippewa, Luce,

Schoolcraft, Alger, Delta, and Marquette counties, is divided into these five units. Units 1, 2, and 3 comprise most of the Eastern Upper Peninsula.

Each unit is represented by an elected tribal member who serves on the tribe's Board of Directors. The number of board representatives per unit is based on population.

The 13-member Board of Directors is the governing body of the tribe.

Each board member is elected to a four-year term by the tribal membership in a general election by mail-in ballot.

Under revisions to the tribal election code made January 17, any tribal members residing inside or outside of the service area who are 18 years of age or older by the date of election shall be qualified to vote, however, are required to register to vote by March 24 to become an eligible voter. More information about voting can be obtained at the March 16 meeting or at the tribe's Web site www.saulttribe.com.



No One Hurt in Truck Fire at Mill Slip

Fire consumed a 1977 truck and camper, owned by Paul McGrath of Mackinac Island, at the St. Ignace Mill Slip Wednesday, March 1. St. Ignace volunteer firefighters douse the truck and camper, which exploded next to small, privately owned crafts and Arnold Transit Company's catamarans, which have been dry-docked for the winter. No one was injured, however, there was minor damage to one craft. Cause of the fire is yet to be determined.

Students Visit Offices of The St. Ignace News



Cub Scout Pack 140 of Les Cheneaux visited *The St. Ignace News/Weekly Wave* offices in Hessel Wednesday, February 22, to fulfill one of the requirements of becoming a Tiger Cub. Gordy Burger (far left) joined Cub Scouts Adam Bishop, Kamen Labinski, Evan Rye, Derek Burger, Jaden Lee, Jayden Smith, Avry Freeland, and Den Mother Brianna Freeland as they toured the offices and learned how news is collected. The scouts are in first grade at Les Cheneaux Elementary, and are learning the importance of the media for transmitting and reporting the news of their communities, Mrs. Freeland said.



The Head Start class from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in St. Ignace toured *The St. Ignace News* office Tuesday, February 21. Pictured are (from left, front) Kennedy Musick, *News* writer Paul Gingras, Reid Marshall, Parker Tracy, Olivia Champion, Gavin Gustafson, Johnathan Gugin (sitting with a newspaper), Artie Boucha (wearing a baseball cap), Andrea McQuiston (seated), Jayde Fraser (seated); (back) Michael McQuiston, teachers Liza Peters and Terri Allan, Donovan Insley, Bailey Stratton (wearing striped hat), Victoria Geldner, Ryan LaVake (kneeling), Logan McMillan, teacher Denise Horn, Lucas Sayles (behind Artie Boucha), teacher Beth St. Onge, and Shyanne Bird.

Portage Twp. To Receive Fire Trucks; Curtis Village Expands

By Paul Gingras

Portage Township has received the final loan necessary for two new fire trucks, which will be assembled this month, said Township Clerk Marcia McDonald. Original estimates for the equipment were off by \$50,020, prompting the township board to request an additional loan from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), bringing the total cost to \$399,000.

USDA grants, loans, and township money funded the upgrades.

The building process on the chassis will be done by Danko Emergency Equipment Company. Smeal Fire Apparatus Company will assemble the second vehicle.

She expects an open house when the vehicles arrive, fully assembled and ready for action.

At the regular township board meeting Tuesday, February 14, board members approved the change of Rueben's Road (which was an unofficial name for a developing two-track) to Wagon Wheel Drive. The street marks the access point to a development on the western end of town initiated by Rueben Abram and his sons, Pat and Tim. The Abrams intend to build a Lutheran day care center, a preschool, and houses near the Curtis cross-country ski trail.

The Abrams needed the township make the road name official because builders will be receiving deliveries on site.

This project has been in the works for quite some time, Mrs. McDonald added.

Wagon Wheel Drive is to the west of the intersection of H-42 and Main Street.

In other business, the board did not approve proposed changes to the zoning of the Amos Brown subdivision, or proposed zoning changes in rural areas of the township.

At a public hearing Tuesday,

February 14, several members of the public asked questions regarding the proposed changes, which were designed to make new building and expansions easier, Mrs. McDonald said.

Some wanted to know if the new zoning rules would affect their ability to have livestock on their land, for instance.

Unable to answer these questions, the board referred the matter back to the planning commission, which will meet Thursday, March 2.

Builders in the Amos Brown subdivision have had long-standing problems meeting township zoning requirements. The lots are unusually small, and they lie within a rural zoning area that requires 50-foot setbacks, even on lots only 45 feet long, making construction impossible in some cases, said Richard Oliver of St. Ignace, the township's assessor.

Zoning variances can cause delays and add expense to projects. Several residents have requested that the township change the designation from "rural" to "residential." The change would change the setbacks from 50 to 15 feet.

Township officials discussed distributing information to residents about changes in the Michigan building code strengthening smoke alarm requirements. The new safety measures could also be required for fire insurance, Mrs. McDonald said.

From now on, every sleeping room, or every room just outside of a sleeping room, must be equipped with a fire alarm containing a five-year battery.

"The days of the cheap nine-volt battery alarms are over," she added.

Tougher state laws require alarms to be placed on every floor of a building, including base-

Rural Safety Is Topic of Forum

Employers may take part in a Job Fair Saturday, April 29, in St. Ignace by registering with the Chamber of Commerce at 643-8717 or Michigan Works at 643-8158. The fair will bring employers and potential employees together at Little Bear East Arena from noon to 3 p.m. There is no charge to participate.

Sponsors are the St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce, the Business Association, Downtown Development Authority, Les Cheneaux Chamber of Commerce, Michigan State University Extension, St. Ignace Area Schools, the county Economic Development Corporation, Consolidated Community Schools Services, and Michigan Works.

Grants To Pay Police Overtime for Extra Patrols

Deadline To Register Friday.

A Rural Safety Forum to discuss teen driving, emergency services, county crash records, and other aspects of safety in rural transportation will be Wednesday, March 22, at Kewadin Casino at Sault Ste. Marie. It is sponsored by the Michigan Department of Transportation and the EUP Regional Planning and Development Commission and is free and open to the public.

There is a registration deadline of Friday, March 17. To register, call (906) 635-1581.

Presentations will include county crash data by safety engineer David Morena, red light running by John Abraham of the City of Troy, an MDOT Community Safety Program by safety engineer Dale Lighthizer, teen driving programs by Susan Richardson of MDOT, history and development of emergency services in Michigan by Bob Struck, director of U.P. EMS, and engineering measures for elderly mobility.

The program begins with continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m., includes a noon meal, and will conclude with a 3 p.m. question and answer period.

A seatbelt grant and a youth alcohol enforcement grant, both of which provide funding for officers working overtime, have been received by the St. Ignace Police Department.

The youth alcohol grant provides overtime pay of up to \$13,986 (a total of 224 overtime hours) to be shared by the St. Ignace City Police and the Mackinac County Sheriff's Department, for "party patrols" and a program called Operation Lookout to control underage drinking.

"We have been very active with this operation," said Chief Tim Matelski. "In the summer, we do a lot around the St. Ignace car show and truck show."

This is the fifth year the city has received the grant.

The seat belt grant will assist the department in enforcing the state's seatbelt law May 22, 24, 26, 31, and June 2. A week prior to May 22, police will be on roaming patrol looking specifically for seatbelt violations.

Both grants came from the state Office of Highway Planning.

*Please turn to page 14