

Residents Hope Grants Will Fund Water Preservation Projects

**Continued from page 1*

banks along the road, while others are worn from use and time.

"What we plan on doing is restoring the hydrology, the natural flow of streams, and we want to eliminate road runoff into streams," Mr. Carr said.

Crossings slated for improvement or installation include one on Point Brulee Road in Hessel; the intersection of Pearson Creek and Meridian Road in Cedarville; a section on State Avenue where Pearson hits the road at a 90-degree angle and often floods; combining two culverts into one on Flower Bay Road in Cedarville; improvements at the intersection of State Avenue and Blind Line Road in Cedarville; adding three larger culverts on Prentiss Bay Road in Cedarville, and installing erosion control measures on Nordquist Road in Cedarville.

The Watershed Council also plans to partner with the road commissions and Les Cheneaux Snowmobile Club to stabilize

stream banks on McKay Creek near road and snowmobile trails that have suffered erosion. There are some places where so much woody debris has piled up, the creek has been diverted from its natural flow direction, accelerating erosion there.

The second largest task is working with Land Information Access Association and LSSU to develop a regional water quality database. The database will be a place where people can see all the water quality research reports, soils maps of the watershed, Geographic Information System software and maps, habitat maps, county and state maps, hydrological data, fishing creel surveys, fish population reports, and "any monitoring that's going on in our area," said Mr. Carr, who is enthusiastic about the prospects of such a system.

"It will be a tool for the average citizen to use to access water quality information from their living room," he added. "And the Watershed Council will be able to continuously enter the latest infor-

mation into the database."

Grant money would also support a hazardous waste collection each summer, for the next five years. Residents would be able to bring batteries, cleaning solvent, and other hazardous materials, medical waste, and chemicals one does not want to put in the trash, or dump on the ground or in the woods.

Another component of the grant would be to assist Clark Township Planning Commission and Board with improving water-quality protection in its master plan and zoning ordinances. The money would be spent on hosting meetings, presentations, and information and education materials to increase awareness of local water quality issues and strategies for implementing zoning ordinances and other development guidelines to protect water quality. Water quality protection ordinances would be added to the township's zoning ordinance.

Money needed for information and education programs, newsletters, workshops about wetlands

regulations, wastewater management, pollution prevention, invasive species management, and other water quality topics are included in the grant request. Information and education programs have the potential for making more people aware of the importance of protecting water quality for consumption, recreational use, and environmental health.

"I think this is a good opportunity to build the momentum for protecting the resource," Mr. Carr said of the grants' potential.

Open Mic Night Set for April 22

All local entertainers are invited to participate at Straits Area Open Mic Night Saturday, April 22, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Tipi Lounge and Flame Restaurant in St. Ignace. The event is hosted periodically by local musician Gene Perry, and this will probably be the last session until next fall, he said.

Hospital Board Faces Citizen Concerns, Inspection Ramifications

**Continued from page 9*

told the residents. "Losing a doctor is a tough thing. I'm not going to disagree with that."

Compounding the problem, noted board member Richard Smith, who was chairing the meeting, is some \$1.4 million in bad debts the hospital has accrued over the past four years, some left by poor patients who have no insurance or means to pay, some left by residents who could pay.

But that isn't the end of the financial challenges at the hospital.

The federal inspection that could require more than \$1 million in immediate repairs and, possibly, the temporary closure of the long term care facility highlights not only the hospital's thin balance sheet but the need for a new facility that Mr. Nelson and the hospital board believe will provide profitable services, like the outpatient surgery and radiation therapy.

About five percent of long term care facilities receive a federal fire inspection, in addition to the regular state inspection, and Mackinac Straits Hospital's long term unit was the first in the Upper Peninsula to get one. A nursing home fire in Ishpeming earlier this year that killed several people probably focused attention in the area, Mr. Nelson told the board.

The Life Safety Code, under which the inspections are made, is revised every three years, he said, and in Michigan, facilities need to be in compliance with the 2000 version. St. Ignace has been inspected under that version for the past two years, he noted, but "our state surveyor inspected us on the intent of the regulation, while the federal inspector was on the word of the law, with no compromise."

That resulted in a 55-page report that cited the facility for minor things, like not liking the way policies or procedures are written or how fire drills are conducted, to moderate problems, like gaps in patient doors that exceed the 1/8-inch allowance, to serious issues, like demanding the replacement of the air handling unit.

About half the items can be fixed with procedural changes or minor expense, which would add up to about \$100,000, Mr. Nelson said. Other corrections, however, like the air handling, could cost more than \$800,000. Because of the amount of construction involved, he added, parts of the long term care facility will probably need to

be closed temporarily.

Added to the burden is a 90-day compliance deadline from May 3, and an immediate response, that includes a plan of action. The hospital can, however, request waivers for items that it cannot comply with in 90 days, because of cost or the time needed for the repairs.

Mackinac Straits Hospital will apply for some waivers, especially for the air handling, and hopes to solicit the help of Congressman Bart Stupak in convincing the federal fire inspectors that a new, state-of-the-art facility is being designed.

Putting a lot of money into a building that is near the end of its useful life is not the first choice of the hospital board, but that could be the focus of future discussions if the hospital's bid for federal assistance to build the new facility doesn't come through.

By August, the board hopes to know if the funding will be available.

So Jim Haveman, the former Michigan Department of Community Health director who has taken this new project on as a model for future national rural health care, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and a team of top-rated engineering, design, and construction companies, are in high gear to prepare plans and submit a certificate of need that will pave the way for the new facility.

One key element in getting federal interest has been the new formal relationship between the hospital and the tribe. Sharing resources will bring two populations together and allow for a range of new medical services that each could not provide independently.

The project is moving along quickly, Greg Koenig told the board March 27. He is the project manager for URS of Southfield, the architectural firm designing the new

facility. He should have the major design elements in place by mid-April and be ready for an early June funding application. A general site plan, derived from a flurry of meetings with hospital officials and staff in March, was unveiled at the meeting, showing a cluster of independent buildings, each housing various functions, such as the Tribal Health Center, Rural Health Clinic, Long Term Care, and a hospital for acute care, each connected to the others, and each with its own parking lot and entrance.

The concept is to create a medical village on the 16-acre site, explained architect George Lewis of URS, that will be friendly to pedestrians, easy to understand, and will allow for expansion as new services are added.

Long term care, which a decade ago was the hospital's cash cow, now longer receives the Medicare incentives it once did, and Medicare money is being funneled more to acute care. Only 83 of the hospital's 91 long term care beds are filled now, so the new long term facility will be smaller, maybe 72 beds. On the other hand, the num-

ber of hospital beds will be expanded, also to 72 beds. Now, said Mr. Nelson, the few hospital beds in the present hospital don't even have private baths, and plastic is used on the windows to keep the drafts down.

So the new hospital will be flexible enough to meet the ever-changing demands and the reimbursements from Medicare. As they change, a flexible campus will be adapted to them. In time, the federal government may even come to believe that quality health care requires more time for physicians and patients to communicate with each other, just as residents here contend.

This month, planners and the board will be deliberating the details of the plan and whether the hospital building will be two or three stories high to maximize the view of the lake and to minimize sprawl. The community will get a chance to see a presentation this month or next. If funding is approved in August, design plans and bidding will take place over the winter and construction could begin as early as spring 2007.

BENTLEY'S
B-n-L
CAFE

Downtown St. Ignace

Closed on Sundays in April - DAILY SPECIALS

THURS., APRIL 13	Turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes & vegetable	\$5 ⁹⁵
FRI., APRIL 14	Prime Choice, choice of potato	\$7 ⁹⁵
	Whitefish & French fries	\$6 ⁹⁵
MON., APRIL 17	Scalloped Potatoes w/Ham & vegetable	\$5 ⁹⁵
TUES., APRIL 18	Meatballs in Gravy & mashed potatoes	\$5 ⁹⁵
WED., APRIL 19	Roasted Pepper & Onion Steak	\$5 ⁹⁵

OPEN at 7:00 a.m. 7 days a week
 Hand Dipped Ice Cream
 Malts & Shakes
 Call for take-out orders
643-7910
 Gift Certificates Available

Engadine Consolidated Schools

by
James P. Wilcoxon
Superintendent

HOME OF THE EAGLES • KNOWLEDGE LETS YOU SOAR

Engadine sixth grade students will be going on their annual trip to Lansing. They will leave at 6 a.m. Thursday, April 20, and return at 10 p.m. Friday, April 21. Some of the places they will tour are the Capitol, Impression V, R.E. Olds Museum, Planetarium, Potter's Park Zoo, and MSU Museum. The money for the trip was earned through the Morley Candy Sale.

National Library Week will be observed during April. First sponsored in 1958, National Library Week is an observance sponsored by the American Library Association and libraries across the country each April. It is a time to celebrate the contributions of our nation's libraries and librarians and to promote library use and support.

All types of libraries – school, public, academic, and special – participate.

On April 19, the Eastern Upper Peninsula Principals Association will hold its annual banquet to honor the academic achievements of the 2006 seniors. Engadine Schools would like to congratulate the following seniors for their high academic achievements: Amy Bigger, Samantha Maison, Stephanie Shaulis, and Jacob Swider.

Calendar

April 13, Boys and Girls Varsity Track, Pickford

April 14, No School

April 18, Boys and Girls Varsity Track, St. Ignace

Because you want it done right!

Car • Truck
SUV • Mini Van

Import or Domestic Repair

OPEN: Mon. - Thurs. 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

TRI-COUNTY MOTORS
(next to Post Office in Rudyard)

478-5331

ELECT

Mike "Chico" Belonga

Proven Positive Leadership
Unit 3 Candidate
Tribal Board of Directors
Tribal Experience...

- 3 yr. Director Native Employment Work Program Assisting Tribal Members Seeking Employment with a 90% Success Rate
- 2+ yrs. Director Lambert Health Clinic The 2nd Busiest Tribal Health Clinic - 30 employees in medical, dental, pharmaceutical, optical, contract health & billing

Commitment...

Our Positive Agenda Includes

- Membership Issues & Concerns First & Foremost They have been Neglected for Too Long
- Position will be Done **FULL TIME** by Attending **ALL** Tribal Functions - Not Just When Other Job or Business will Allow
- We Will Hold Regular Office Hours in **St. Ignace, Mackinac Island & Cheboygan County**
- Positive Alternative for Membership in Unit 3

This advertisement endorsed by Mike "Chico" Belonga and paid for by the Committee to Elect Mike "Chico" Belonga Tribal Board of Directors Unit 3. 906-643-8343.

FINALLY GET THE
CAR AND THE
RESPECT YOU NEED!!

NO HASSLE
24 HOUR HOTLINE

1-800-705-6502

BANKRUPT • DIVORCE
CHARGE OFF • BAD CREDIT
REPOSSESSIONS • SLOW PAY

APPLY NOW FOR FAST
AUTO LOAN APPROVAL!

With Approved Credit • All
Bankruptcies Must Be Discharged

WORLD CARS USA

Kindergarten

Orientation & Registration

at
St. Ignace Elementary School
WED., APRIL 19, 2006
NOON - 6:30 P.M.

- Small classes - No combined grades
- Young 5s for students not ready for Kindergarten
- Morning Sessions
- Music, Art, Physical Education daily by certified staff
- Computer use for every student
- A reading recovery district
- Lunch served daily
- North Central Association accreditation in process
- Non-residents welcome under "Schools of Choice"

Call 643-8500 for an appointment

Country Line Tours & Travel

Full Service Travel Agency

1005 W. Washington Ave
Alpena, Michigan 49707

800-771-9560
989-356-3964

countrylinetours
@charterinternet.net

- Cruises
- Airlines
- Car Rentals
- Resort packages
- Honeymoons
- Wedding Bus
- Prom Bus
- Company Christmas Parties

Serving Northeast Lower
Michigan and Eastern Upper
Peninsula

Office Hours: Monday-Friday
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

UPCOMING GROUP TRAVEL

MAY 6 & 7, 2006	Phantom of the Opera Miller Auditorium, Kalamazoo, MI
MAY 12 & 13, 2006	10th Anniversary Gaither Homecoming Tour Grand Rapids, MI
JUNE 14 THRU 19, 2006	VietNam Vets – Welcome Home Branson, MO
JUNE 24, 2006	Detroit Tigers vs St. Louis Cardinals 11 tickets left
JULY – 2006	The Young Americans - Boyne City, MI
JULY 15, 2006	Chesaning Showboat - Featuring – LONESTAR \$93 per person Reservation by April 21st.
AUGUST 13 THRU 16, 2006	Mississippi Riverboat Cruise Dinner/Show-On Golden Pond - Bettendorf, Iowa
AUGUST 18 & 19, 2006	U.P. State Fair - Escanaba, MI
SEPTEMBER 9 THRU 14, 2006	Dollywood & Smoky Mountains, Pigeon Forge, TN
SEPTEMBER 23 & 24, 2006	Trace Adkins St. Joseph Grange Fair, Centerville, MI
OCTOBER 5 THRU 8, 2006	Mall of America, Bloomington, MN