

# Lakes Listed as Top Asset at St. Ignace Meeting for County Master Plan

By Ryan Schlehuder

Five citizens, including this reporter, weighed the benefits of working and living in the St. Ignace area against its potential drawbacks at a workshop Wednesday, September 13, to gather information for a new county-wide master plan. The meeting was held at the St. Ignace Public Library and led by Michigan State University Extension. It was the third of three meetings held in Mackinac County. The Engadine and Cedarville sessions were reported two weeks ago.

Wade-Trim of Gaylord was hired by Mackinac County to guide the master planning process and the

information from the three sessions will aid in planning for future development. The county master plan will not supersede existing local master plans, said Mackinac County Extension Director Michelle Walk, but can aid those townships which may not have one. She hopes the master plan can be a blueprint for the county, incorporating a sense of unity among townships and cities.

The Great Lakes is the area's most significant asset, citizens decided, providing scenic interest, development potential, and attraction for tourists. Other assets are the Mackinac Bridge, Mackinac Island, and outdoor recreation, and it was

noted the area benefits from the support of state legislators, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and organizations like the St. Ignace Community Foundation.

Historic preservation is necessary, the citizens believe, and benefit from two St. Ignace museums, Michilimackinac Historical Society's Fort de Buade Museum and the city's Marquette Mission Park and Museum of Ojibwa Culture.

Other cultural development projects under discussion include an interactive Native history and crafts complex and reconstruction of the Welcome Center at the north end of the Mackinac Bridge to include an

area devoted to Michigan's transportation history and the history of the bridge.

A new joint project of Mackinac Straits Hospital and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians will address community health for the next several decades, citizens believe, with construction of a \$23 million facility over the next several years.

Cellular telephone reception is poor in much of the Upper Peninsula, but, according to county 9-1-1 coordinator Bryce Tracey, communications companies like Sprint, Verizon, and Nextel are installing new cellular towers.

The county master plan will not address recreation, Ms. Walk said, but several recreation projects, such as expanding the St. Ignace golf course from nine holes to 18, and a proposed bicycle trail from St. Ignace to DeTour, were cited as examples of economically beneficial.

Homelessness and affordable housing were other issues brought up during the meeting, and Lori Pieri, the executive director of Housing Opportunities Made Equal, said her group has applied for funding to build another five homes.

A 24-unit St. Ignace apartment building slated for completion in February will address the housing needs of some of the area's senior citizens, citizens noted.

The following is a list of assets

and weaknesses listed for St. Ignace:

**Natural and Cultural Resources.** Assets: geographic attractiveness, Great Lakes, state and federal land, historic sites, clean air, "Gateway to U.P.," natural beauty, Mackinac Island. Weaknesses: lack of fishing and shipping heritage events, pond area in St. Ignace needs to be developed, state permit processes cumbersome, protection of historical artifacts and green space.

**Recreation Opportunities.** Assets: marinas and docks, tourism, opportunities for children's recreation, golf course, hunting, fishing, school athletics, casino, boardwalk and parks. Weaknesses: lack of

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## Educators Say Early Learning Is Critical for Autistic Students

### St. Ignace Parent Researches EUP Education Services

By Paul Gingras

Three-year-old Samara Maldonado of St. Ignace was recently diagnosed with autism, spurring her mother, Gia Lopez, to research educational services available in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. A dentist for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Mrs. Lopez was deployed as a military dentist in the Army Reserves in 2005. While she was away, family members caring for Samara, who was 18 months old at the time, informed Mrs. Lopez that her daughter's speaking abilities had stopped developing.

Eastern Upper Peninsula (EUP) educators say that medical discoveries are leading to increasing numbers of children, some younger than five years old, being diagnosed with Autism Spectrum

Disorder, a neurological disorder with symptoms that can be reduced dramatically by early intervention.

Autism can significantly affect a person's ability to interpret and react to external reality, said Ruth Kuchuk, an autism consultant who has worked for the EUP Intermediate School District (ISD) since 2005. The "spectrum" designation is important, she said, because symptoms of autism range widely in severity.

Programs to help children with autism are different for each individual, but they are always coordinated among several agencies, Mrs. Kuchuk said.

Head Start programs, local school districts, and the ISD work together to provide students with training to help reduce the effects of autism, which in mild to moderate cases can enable children with the disorder to function in regular classes. This is important, because

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## Former Telephone Operators Keep in Touch at St. Ignace

Nineteen St. Ignace switchboard operators who worked for Michigan Bell prior to 1974 met at Mackinac Grille Thursday, September 14, for their monthly Keep in Touch (KIT) gathering. The date marked an unusually large turnout for the group. Pictured (left, front to back) are Prudy Mills, Dana Goudreau, Shirley Sorenson, Delores Calaterra, and Susan Eckstrom, Helen Nakarado; (hidden from view) Jackie Dell, Supervisor Mary Tromblay, Chief Operator Gert Litzner, and Cheboygan guest Rosemary Percy; (right, front to back) Betty Smith, Sally Valentine, Elaine Jackson, Ruth Cope, Gladys Tamlyn, Marge Robinson, Dixie Johnston, Eleanor Fitzpatrick (hidden), and Irene Comps.

## Clark Twp. Considers Funding One Full-Time EMT Position

By Amy Polk

Clark Township trustees, meeting Wednesday, September 27, discussed funding a full-time emergency medical technician (EMT) during the days and asked Clark Township Ambulance Corps volunteers to recommend other staffing solutions for its October meeting.

"It's getting harder and harder to get day volunteers," said Township Supervisor Linda Hudson, who suggested a full-time employee could also do the ambulance service billing and accounting.

The lack of adequate volunteer coverage in the daytime is a liability, she said, and this problem has been going on for years. People's day jobs, out-of-town employment, and tough certification requirements, she noted, are getting in the way of having volunteers on call during the day. The late Charlie Paquin, who helped establish the ambulance corps, told the Clark Township Board in 2000 that getting day shift volunteers had been a problem for 20 years.

Clark Township, in October 2000, considered hiring an EMT to be on duty from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. and had planned to ask voters for 0.5 mill, which would have raised \$60,000, but the proposition never reached voters and the initiative died when most of the board left office that fall.

Trustee Mike Lofdahl called last week's discussion "10 years overdue," and said he has heard some ideas for how the community can have day shift volunteers without additional costs to Clark Township.

Mrs. Hudson suggested that a special assessment levied against the entire township could raise money for an EMT, and would have the advantage of getting tax contributions from tax-exempt properties that use such services, like Cedar Cove Assisted Living Facility. It could be adjusted according to needs, she said, and could be levied by the township without a ballot. Public hearings would be required, however, she

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## City Manager: It's Time To Plan for Future Trends

By Ryan Schlehuder

St. Ignace City Manager Eric Dodson suggested to City Council Monday, October 2, that it is time for city leaders and department heads to plan for the future beyond the next fiscal year. While he told Council he has 85 percent of the 2007 budget completed, he is encouraging department heads and city council members to create a rough outlook for the years ahead, similar to what the Department of Public Works was required to do to climb out of a severe deficit.

Cities and villages across the state, he said, are now including trends, goals, and assumptions into a model plan that stretches farther into the future.

"There was a day when the city was in the black and there will be a day when it is back in the black," said Mr. Dodson. "I'm advocating a more long-term plan, figuring out how our deficits happened and prevent them from happening again."

The last time the city was in the

black was in 2002. Mr. Dodson said the city will likely see its water department deficit erased briefly this year, but it will more than likely dip back into a deficit as it faces an estimated \$260,000 bond payment in January.

"We're seeing improvement in the water department creep up, then dip, and then it will creep up more," said Mr. Dodson. "I'm not encouraging us lower rates at this time, but we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel."

The water deficit has improved from \$106,000 to only \$24,071 and the sewer deficit has been reduced from \$146,000 to \$104,702 in the past year.

A new county-wide smoke-free worksite regulation will go into effect Saturday, October 7, and the city will be responsible for enforcing it for all enclosed facilities and vehicles in the city. St. Ignace Area Schools will enforce the policy at its schools and at the McCann football field and the school's track and soft-

## Three Sisters Honored With Eagle Feathers at Hessel Powwow

Three descendants of one of the area's oldest native families gathered at the 14th Annual Hessel Powwow in August, where their families were recognized by the presentation of eagle feathers and special dances.

The three sisters, Margaret Causley Vassar, 80, of Cedarville, Katherine Causley LaPointe, 75, of Sault Ste. Marie, and Anne Causley, 69, of Sault Ste. Marie, participated in the three-day event, which culminated Sunday, August 20, with the presentation of four eagle feathers. Eagle feathers are the highest tribute that can be awarded to a tribal member and were presented by Anne Causley's son, Steve Causley of Kincheloe, who said they were given "for strength for the Causley and Osogwin families, to help bring and keep them together."

The women are the daughters of Mary (nee Osogwin) and Perry



Three sisters, (from left) Margaret (nee Causley) Vassar, Anne Causley, and Katherine (nee Causley) LaPointe, reunited in August at the Hessel Powwow.

Causley, who bore nine children, Wilfred, Joe, Ray, Frances, Margaret, John, Katherine, Wilfred, and Anne. The first-born,

Wilfred, died at the age of 17, so the Causleys named their youngest son in memory of him. The three Causley sisters are the

last remaining siblings from the family that went on to produce approximately 100 descendants, and remains one of the largest American Indian families in the area.

Their mother, Mary, is the daughter of Joseph and Theresa Beaver Osogwin. The Osogwins were well known to the Cedarville and Hessel settlers in the late 1800s. They were a prominent fishing and trapping family and assisted several settlers with early life in the Les Cheneaux Islands, teaching them how to cope with the local weather and land conditions.

Also at the powwow, a new eagle staff commissioned by the Hessel Elders to represent them was displayed. John Dutcher, a Hessel woodcarver, spent 156 hours carving the staff from a single piece of wood. It depicts an eagle perched on a globe.

## Local LMAS Hospice Patients Receive Handmade Quilts

Handmade quilts are being given to each client of LMAS Hospice in Mackinac County. The quilts are made and donated by volunteer Nancy Smith. The hos-

pice program, administered by Luce-Mackinac-Alger-Schoolcraft (LMAS) Health Department, she said, provides comfort to patients nearing the end of their lives.

Shirley "Jane" St. Andrew of St. Ignace, one of the first quilt recipients in the program, said she appreciated receiving hers, as she has made many quilts herself but gave them all to others.

Each quilt is embroidered with the message, "This quilt is given to you with warm and comforting thoughts from LMAS Hospice of Mackinac County." Embroidery was donated by A & I Midwest Printing of St. Ignace.

Judy Misner, RN, said there is a misconception that patients must be close to death or have difficulty with pain control to use hospice services. Instead, she pointed out, patients and families benefit from earlier support from the hospice team as care focuses on a patient's physical, psychosocial, and spiritual comfort. Services are provided in the patient's home and in community care facilities by a team including physicians, registered nurses, social workers, home health aides, therapists, volunteers, and spiritual and bereave-



Shirley "Jane" St. Andrew of St. Ignace receives a hospice quilt, made and donated by volunteer Nancy Smith, from Lee Hall, RN, of LMAS Hospice. (Photograph courtesy of LMAS Hospice)

ment staff. Family are supported even after the death of a loved one, she said.

Hospice services are available to patients with Alzheimer's Disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, cancer, diseases of the lung, heart, and liver,

and aging. Services are covered by Medicare and Medicaid. Many other insurances also offer hospice benefits, and memorial funds are available, if needed.

More information about hospice services is available by calling 643-7700.

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