

The St. Ignace News

Design Plan for Repairs to City's Cracked Water Tank Expected by June

By Ryan Schlehuber

A plan to repair the city's water tower in Evergreen Shores may be ready as early as the second week of June, reported City Manager Eric Dodson during St. Ignace City Council's brief meeting Monday, May 21.

The tower cracked along its base during a blizzard in February, resulting in the evacuation of three nearby homes. Pittsburgh Tank and Tower of Pennsylvania, the company hired by the city to install a 26.6-foot extension to the tank's stem, has yet to be given its final payment of \$80,000 by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. The tribe will hold the payment until the problem is permanently resolved.

The tribe is paying for the extension because it will service its new hotel and casino on Mackinac Trail.

Mr. Dodson said Pittsburgh Tank and Tower is designing plan to wrap a layer of steel around the weak area, a suggestion St. Ignace resident and industrial technology engineer Fred Schlehuber made to the city at an April city council meeting.

Dixon Engineering of Lansing has taken over supervision of the repair. Meanwhile, Pittsburgh Tank and Tower continues to disappoint council members, who, at the meeting, questioned why the city has yet to receive test results from the company to explain why the tank failed.

Councilman Don Gustafson questioned how Pittsburgh Tank and Tower can proceed with a plan when it does not know the results of the failure analysis test.

"It's like in medicine, before you decide on surgery, you need the x-ray," he said. "I think before we do this wrap-around plan, we need to find out the results of the failure analysis."

Pittsburgh Tank and Tower said the steel used on the tank was good, Mr. Dodson reported, however, he said it was never actually tested by the company. He told Council he is confident Dixon Engineering will see the project to a sound completion.

"Dixon is our agent," Mr. Gustafson said, "but Pittsburgh Tank needs to stand behind its product."

Council's Utilities Commiggee will meet to discuss Don Lawson's request to relieve him of "readiness to serve" utilities charges to three lots he owns in St. Ignace. A meeting date has yet to be set. At the meeting, he said he has buildings on each lot but does not use water or sewer on any of them and has had the meters removed. He calls the "readiness to serve charge" a "rip-off charge."

"I've been paying approximately, with interest, about \$200 a month for each place," he said. "It's cleaning me out of my money and I would like it changed so you will stop send-

ing me bills."

Readiness to serve charges are required for each property owner by the bond holders to insure the city will collect enough money to pay off the bonds. The bonds were sold to finance construction of city utilities.

Meeting Mr. Lawson's request would necessitate an amendment to the city's ordinance on its readiness to serve policy.

The city is already in violation of its bond restriction, said Mr. Dodson, as it has no money reserved in its sanitary sewer disposal debt fund, which is supposed to contain \$244,000, equal to the amount of one payment.

"If [the billing] keeps on, I'll remove the buildings and my property value will go down, and the city loses money," warned Mr. Lawson. "Always keep that in mind."

Dennis Kunding Sr., owner of Wolverine Fireworks Display Company (formerly Kundis Fireworks Display Shows) of Kawkawlin, was issued a permit to display fireworks at the Fourth of July celebration this year for approximately \$7,500, the same price as in past years.

The city is in its fourth and final year of its contract with Mr. Kunding.

Councilman Merv Wyse spoke on behalf of Chamber of Commerce Director Janet Peterson, thanking the

city for supporting the Chamber's first mud run near Little Bear East Arena and Community Center Saturday, May 19.

"It was not as big of a turnout as we expected, but the course was good," said Mr. Wyse, noting cold weather on the day of the outdoor

event.

The Chamber's next two mud runs this summer should draw bigger crowds because they will be in the middle of the tourist season, when there are more people here and warmer days, said City Treasurer Eugene Elmer.

The city did not receive any complaints from residents about noise from the mud run.

"The longest run was 28 seconds," said Mr. Wyse. "I think it went very well. It's in a good spot."

The Midland Community Center

* Please turn to page 27

Freshening Look of M-134, M-129 Corner



Electrician Lon Kologe of Cedarville works on illuminating the relocated American flag at the northeast corner of M-134 and M-129 in Cedarville, in front of Cedarville Foods. A member of the Les Cheneaux Advisory Committee, Mr. Kologe and other volunteers on the committee are freshening the look of the corner by replacing aging flower beds and moving back the flagpole, as required by the Michigan Department of Transportation. As work takes place over the next few weeks, new flowers and stone borders will be added to the site.

Planning Board Places Time Limit on Variances

By Ryan Schlehuber

Minor zoning changes were recommended to St. Ignace City Council by the Planning Commission at its meeting Wednesday, May 23. One recommendation is to require anyone who has been granted a zoning variance to obtain a building permit within one year.

City building inspector Paul Sved made that and other suggestions to correct omissions in the ordinance.

Under the recommendation, if a building permit is not obtained within a year, the variance will expire and the process of requesting a variance, which includes a \$100 fee, will have to be repeated.

If a building permit is allowed to expire for lack of progress on the project, the variance will also expire, said Mr. Sved. Building

permits also have a life span of one year, but can be extended as long as there is steady progress on construction or a legitimate reason for delays.

Mr. Sved and City Manager Eric Dodson both said since the issue of incorporating an expiration date on variances was brought up last month and reported in *The St. Ignace News*, the city has received no complaints.

St. Ignace has nine outstanding variances.

The word "ground" was removed from the ordinance referring to the city's R-1 and R-2 districts.

In the ordinance for R-1 districts, it states "a one family dwelling shall contain a minimum total ground floor area of 1,000 square feet and a minimum vol-

ume of 8,000 cubic feet."

Ground should be removed, Mr. Sved said, because a two-story home, 24 feet by 28 feet, could have a floor area of 672 square feet and not meet zoning requirements. The second floor, however, he said, would provide the necessary area to meet the 1,000-square-foot minimum.

The same example could also be used for the R-2 district ordinance, he explained.

Mr. Sved's final suggestions, which Planning Commission agreed with, were to require bed and breakfast operations to maintain a log book for the city to review and to implement a review process for establishment of a bed and breakfast.

"We don't keep track of them in any way," said Mr. Sved. "Someone should at least know where these B and B's are, and follow up with them."

He knows of only three bed and breakfast operations in the city, he said, but there could be more.

Mr. Dodson said he will see what kind of review process other communities have to gather ideas that could be used in St. Ignace.

The process of establishing a tower and antenna ordinance is slowly progressing, Mr. Dodson told the Planning Commission. The issue was brought up last month following discussion of the state's plans to dismantle the unused police communications tower on Amelia Street, and the possibility of a Nextel antenna tower being constructed on First Street.

The proposed ordinance must be sensitive to air traffic regulations and obstruction concerns, said Mr. Dodson.

The ordinance must include maintenance regulations and plans for dismantling any tower or antenna that is inactive, said Commission Chairman Art Underwood.

No action was taken on the issue.

Bob Boynton has resigned from the Planning Commission because of a busy work schedule, he announced in a letter. Mayor Paul Grondin said he will begin gathering names of interested people to fill the seat, and may advertise its availability in the newspaper, at the suggestion of Commissioner Fred Strich.

Other commissioners include Mr. Underwood, Mr. Strich, Renee Vonderwerth, Susan Tamlyn-Massaway, and Mike Lilliquist.

The Planning Commission's next meeting will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 20.

Farmers Market To Be Featured in St. Ignace

By Ryan Schlehuber

To promote local farmers and their products, Mackinac County Michigan State Extension (MSUE) is offering a farmers market at the St. Ignace Public Marina each Saturday until fall.

Michelle Walk, director of the county MSUE office, is hoping the program will meet with as much success as it has in Sault Ste. Marie, which grew from two vendors in 2003 to 39 vendors last year.

The program will not take place in St. Ignace Antique Auto Show weekend or Labor Day weekend.

The first St. Ignace farmers market will feature three to five

vendors from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 2.

Ms. Walk is hoping to have at least 10 vendors by fall.

"It's important to support our local farmers as a business," said Ms. Walk. "It gives the residents in the area an idea of who the local farmers are and it gives farmers a chance to sell their products locally."

Items such as eggs, honey, and maple syrup may be featured at the first few markets.

"The first few weeks will be a little hard because there's just not much produce yet," said Ms. Walk, "but hopefully by the late summer and early fall, we will be able to

offer a variety of produce and products such as pumpkins, vegetables, meat, and fish. By July, we will expect a variety."

Vendors set their own prices, said Ms. Walk.

Farmers who participate in the market must meet certain requirements. Vendors must reside in Mackinac, Chippewa, or Luce counties and apply to participate. Products must be grown or manufactured in the Eastern Upper Peninsula by the vendor or a family member. For manufactured products, vendors must be able to verify that they have the appropriate permits or licenses to manufacture the product.

Local artisans and craftsmen may also participate. They must follow the same guidelines.

Ms. Walk said she hopes to hold a workshop for farmers and vendors to learn more about state and federal food guidelines; no date has been scheduled yet.

Vendors do not have to pay a participation fee at the market but will be asked to donate 1% of sales to continue to support the St. Ignace farmers market.

Vendors who would like to participate are asked to call Michelle Walk at 643-7307.

St. Marys Clean-up Completed

The Coast Guard has finished clean-up operations for a May 24 diesel fuel oil spill on the St. Marys River, it reported Friday, May 25.

The *Joyce L. Vanekenvort* made notification to the Coast Guard of discharging an estimated 200 to 300 gallons of diesel fuel into the Middle Neebish Channel of the river, during its upbound transit to Marquette to deliver a load of limestone. The fuel spill is the result of an overflow that occurred after the 835-foot integrated tug and barge completed an internal fuel transfer, near Light 39 in the channel. Shortly after the transfer, crewmembers noticed fuel on deck and determined that there was a discharge into the waterway.

Both U.S. and Canadian response teams cleaned up the area within about 10 hours to protect environmentally sensitive habitat along both countries' shorelines. Coast Guard helicopters and small boats conducted aerial and shoreline surveys of the effected area to confirm that there were no indications of residual effects on or along the Middle Neebish channel.

The *Joyce L. Vanekenvort* was released and continued its transit up the St. Marys River. The *Cason J. Calloway* was the only vessel affected by the temporary Safety Zone established by the Sault Ste. Marie Captain of the Port. The vessel remained at anchor in Munuscong Lake, six miles south of the affected area, for approximately four and half hours. The Middle Neebish channel is now open to all traffic bound for Lake Superior.

Coast Guard Sector Sault Ste. Marie Marine Inspectors are investigating the circumstances surrounding the discharge of diesel fuel into the St. Marys River.

Water quality concerns may be directed to the Chippewa County Environmental Health Department at (906) 635-3620. Anyone who has experienced property damage as a result of the spill may call (906) 466-9959.

Red Hat Convention Will Be June 1

More than 150 women are expected to take part in a Red Hat Society Convention in St. Ignace this weekend, beginning Friday, June 1, at 5 p.m. at Little Bear East Arena. The two-day event will include a sunset Straits cruise, baking contest, Country Stars Autograph Contest in downtown St. Ignace, and a contest to design a birthday card for the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge.

"We have 30 people registered from the local Jewels of the Straits Red Hat Society, which is our co-sponsor, and the rest of the registrants are coming from all over the Midwest," said Lynne Piippo, director of the St. Ignace Visitors Bureau. The local group hosts the convention to showcase the hospitality of the St. Ignace area to visiting Red Hat Societies.

"Country Fun" will be the theme of the third annual convention, which begins with a How-Dee-Dee welcome session, followed by a Chuckwagon Dinner and Cowgirls Hoe Down at Kewadin Casino. Prize money totaling \$500 will

be divided among top entries in two weekend contests, a Mackinac Bridge 50th Birthday Card Contest and a Pie and Cobbler Baking Contest. Winning card designs will be displayed at the sunset cruise under the Mackinac Bridge Saturday evening.

Registered shoppers at downtown businesses may also qualify for prize money of \$125, \$75, or \$25 during the Country Stars Autograph Contest. Participants will receive contest materials at registration.

Boarding will begin at 7:45 p.m. Saturday for a Straits of Mackinac cruise aboard Arnold Line Ferry. The Bait Shop Boys will provide entertainment, and food and beverages will be served, along with a cash bar.

Participants at the convention will receive discounts and gifts from local attractions and stores. Participants may be members of any Red Hat Society, or may join the society at the convention. Registration and information is available by calling the Visitors Bureau at 643-6950.



Attention Cat and Kitten Owners in the area-

"Friends of the Animals" is sponsoring a **LOW-COST Spay/Neuter Clinic** in Cedarville on **Tues., June 5th & Wed., June 6th**

This Program is for needy, low income families ONLY!

Please call (906) 643-6252 for an appointment.



Friends of the Animals is a not for profit organization helping animals since 1999