

St. Ignace Schools To Use Surplus Fund To Erase Expected \$164K Deficit

By Paul Gingras

"Financially, we are not out of the woods, yet, but we are back on the path that takes us there," reported St. Ignace Area Schools Superintendent Mike Springsteen at the Monday, June 11, school board meeting at which the board adopted its amended 2006/2007 budget, its projected 2007/2008 budget, and set administrative salaries.

This year, the state ultimately provided the school with \$7,085 per student and the district will end the school year with a fund balance of \$489,166. By the time the school is audited in August, Business Manager Kathy McLeod expects the district to have taken in \$6,666,859 and spent \$6,533,188. For the athletic fund, she expects the district to have taken in approximately \$201,000 and spent \$171,000. Added to the previous fund balance will create a new beginning balance of \$74,000. For the school lunch program,

the district will have taken in about \$291,000 and spent \$299,000, leaving a fund balance of about \$44,000. More bills are on the way, but state and federal lunch funding is expected to trickle in this summer, so the district's lunch fund may be in the black by audit time, Mrs. McLeod explained. Next year's revenues will depend on the state's per-pupil funding, declining enrollment, and other factors, said Mrs. McLeod. If the state maintains its school foun-

datation allowance at the same rate as this year, St. Ignace will draw \$163,952 from its savings to compensate for rising costs for salaries and supplies. The board adopted its projected budget for the 2007/2008 school year, noting that the state could increase or decrease the amount of per-pupil funding. If so, the following figures would change. The adopted budget relies on a \$7,085 foundation allowance for 750 students. Enrollment has been dropping by 25 to 30 students annually, Mrs. McLeod said. For the general fund, the district expects to take in \$6,250,420 and spend about \$6,414,372. It will draw \$163,952 from its fund balance to cover expenses and add to a reserve fund to pay staff sick days, termination pay, and other costs. This will leave \$275,214 in the fund balance. For the athletic fund, the district

expects to take in approximately \$180,000 and spend \$167,000, leaving a balance of \$58,000, a figure which takes into account the previous fund balance. For school lunch, the district expects to take in approximately \$269,000 and spend \$285,000, leaving a balance of \$36,000. Drawing from the fund balance allows the district to avoid increasing the cost of school lunch, or cutting staffing for another year, Mrs. McLeod said. If the state or federal government increases lunch program funding, this could balance the budget, she added. Prior to the regular meeting, the board held a public hearing to discuss millages that provide some of the district's funding. This year, the district will levy 18 mills for school operations, expected to generate about \$1.4 million. It is the second largest

contributor to the school's general fund, most of which is used to pay salaries, Mrs. McLeod explained. The district will also levy 1.6 mills to pay debts incurred for elementary school renovations. This will generate approximately \$225,000. For middle school renovations, the district will levy 2.6 mills, generating about \$366,000. For busses, it will levy 0.21 mills, generating about \$29,000. To pay debts for LaSalle High School renovations, the district will levy 0.9748 mills, generating approximately \$137,000. Altogether, the district collects 23.38 mills. The board set the following administrative salaries for the 2007/2008 school year: LaSalle High School principal, \$84,472; St. Ignace Elementary and Middle School principal, \$73,440; business manager, \$54,863.

Cedarville's Corner Street Work Completed



Les Cheneaux Advisory Committee members (counter clockwise, from left) Barb Smith, Jane Kologe, Donna House, Margie Denoyer (front), and Sharon Smith are in the center of the renovated garden at the northeast corner of M-134 and M-129 in Cedarville, following its completion May 30.

By Amy Polk

The corners of highways M-129 and M-134 in Cedarville have a cleaner and brighter look owing to the hard work of the Les Cheneaux Advisory Committee.



Committee volunteers removed the broken split rail fence and rotting railroad ties bordering flower beds at the northeast corner in front of Cedarville Foods, and moved a flagpole and pole lighting back from the highway into the garden area. A border made of native stone now surrounds the flower beds that were lined with landscape fabric and filled with new soil. New perennial plants were planted in the beds, and the existing plants originally placed by former Advisory Committee members were divided and replanted. Dividing perennials helps keep the plants healthy, creates new plants, and encourages flowering plants to produce more blooms. New cedar mulch was also spread on the beds. Work was finished the first week of June.

Caught in action, Les Cheneaux Advisory Committee members (from left) Chuck Denoyer, Donna House, Ollie House, and Margie Denoyer place landscaping fabric, a native stone border, cedar mulch, and tidy up around the flower beds at the corner of M-134 and M-129 in Cedarville.

On the northwest corner of the intersection next to Pammi's Restaurant, volunteers removed a broken fence.

chased by Clark Township several years ago, and were recently found in storage.

Committee members Sherry and Rick Burd have taken charge of planting flowers around the gazebo in Cedarville's downtown waterfront park.

The Les Cheneaux Advisory Committee was founded more than 20 years ago by former Clark Township Supervisor Gene Collins to advise the township board on community improvement projects. Over the years the organization established a pavilion, electricity, and split rail fence at Cedar Cemetery, sponsored a holiday decoration contest, established and maintained the Mackinac Bay Overlook in Hessel, commissioned wooden street signs, and placed decorative corn stalks and Christmas bows in the fall and winter.

Other summer projects include repaving the northeast corner of M-134 and Three-Mile Road in Hessel, where the Advisory Committee pruned existing shrubs and planted annual flowering plants. They are planning to replace a fence at the corner as well.

The organization cooperated with Les Cheneaux Lions Club to install gazebos in the public parks on the Cedarville and Hessel waterfronts, and welcome signs at the entrances to Cedarville and Hessel.

Future projects include purchasing and installing patriotic banners on electric poles in Cedarville and Hessel to add a splash of color to the two villages. The organization received Clark Township Board of Trustees approval and support this spring to apply for permission to hang the banners on Edison Sault Electric poles in downtown areas.

The organization's activities are paid for through voluntary donations and fundraising efforts. Beautification efforts have been helped by free flowers from the Chippewa Correctional Facility in Kinross, which has an extensive gardening program and grows flowers that are donated to Eastern Upper Peninsula municipalities. Clark Township has received flats of flowers for several years to plant at its marina, public docks and park areas, and at the sites maintained by the Advisory Committee.

Advisory Committee members hope to have the banners up by July 4 for Independence Day festivities. Advisory committee members would like to purchase another 12 banners printed with artwork representative of the Les Cheneaux Islands area. A design featuring a wooden boat on water has been created and approved by Cedarville artist, Norine Rudd.

Les Cheneaux Community Foundation gave the group a \$3,000 grant to replace welcome signs and support flower bed renovation efforts this spring.

The committee will raise money for the new banners during Cedarville's Independence Day parade and festivities. The group will also sell navy blue hooded and crew style sweatshirts with white-lettered "Les Cheneaux Islands" and an embroidered wooden boat design on the front.

The committee reorganized over the past year, and welcomes volunteers, donations, and beautification ideas. Members include Donna and Ollie House, Sherry

and Rick Burd, Jane and Lon Kologe, Barb and Bob Smith, Sharon and Robert W. Smith, Pat Duncan, Mary Baker, and Margie and Chuck Denoyer. Both Mrs. House and Mrs. Baker are certified Master Gardeners, and lend their experience and education to the organization's botanical projects.

Youth To Host Epoufette Powwow June 23

A group of 19 young campers at Epoufette will host a free powwow Saturday, June 23, as a way to learn more about traditional Native American culture. All tribal and non-tribal people are invited to take part in the day's events on the shore of Lake Michigan, which the campers are calling "Bridging the Gap" Rendezvous and Powwow. Activities begin at 4 p.m. and will include a feast, crafts, traditional Native American games, bicycling, kayaking, and building a teepee and a wigwam as a group project.

"It will be a day of cultural enrichment for native and non-native people, and will teach the kids more about this heritage," said event organizer Kellie Nightlinger, owner of the summer camp. "We have 35 campers visiting from Michigan and Wisconsin, ages 12 to 17, many of whom were here last summer as well, and this was their idea for experiencing tribal culture. It will be a welcoming atmosphere for everyone to take part. The kids are making gifts for tribal children and elders and they will offer a feast." Those who would like to demonstrate skills, stories, dances, or traditions of any Native American tribe are invited to participate. All families, tribal and non-tribal, are welcome to attend.

"We're calling it 'bridging the gap' because we want to bridge the

Twp. Salaries To Be Decided by Residents

By Amy Polk

For the first time in more than a decade, residents will be able to vote on the salaries of Clark Township officials Saturday, June 30, at an annual meeting. The meeting will be at 10 a.m., and tentatively planned for the new picnic pavilion in the recreation park behind Clark Township Hall in Cedarville. The alternative location for the meeting is Clark Township Hall.

item electors can officially vote on at an annual meeting. "Advisory" votes will be taken on the charter township and name changing items. These items cannot be officially voted on by residents, however, they can give the board their opinions on whether the board should pursue action. Clark Township Board of Trustees tentatively set the annual meeting agenda at a May 17 meeting.

All Clark Township residents, both year-around and seasonal, are invited to participate in discussion about salaries, changing the name of the township, and whether Clark should become a charter township.

Trustees elected last year to revive the annual meeting to give the public the opportunity to vote on salaries, following disagreement over whether elected officials should get raises, and the amount of any raises. The practice of trustees approving their own raises by board resolution has been questioned by some residents, as was the board's establishing a health, dental, and optical insurance benefit package for all full-time Clark Township

Township electors, which includes registered voters and anyone eligible to become a registered voter, will be able to vote on Clark Township Board of Trustees' salaries. According to Michigan statute, that is the only

Portage Twp. Prepares for Summer Events

By Paul Gingras

The death of Curtis resident Harold "Watts" Stamper was noted early in the Tuesday, June 12, meeting of the Portage Township Board of Trustees. Mr. Stamper passed away Monday, June 11, at 79 years old.

in addition to his duties as a member of the municipal government. Watts Stamper Park was named in his honor by the township board, she added.

"We are all going to miss Watts," said Township Supervisor Donald Ferris, who explained that Mr. Stamper was an active and influential member of the community. He was a trustee on the township board for many years, said clerk Marcia McDonald, who began her municipal service 10 years ago and worked with Mr. Stamper for about two years.

Mrs. McDonald reported that the township is busy updating its addresses to comply with the 2010 U.S. census. The census affects the amount of state revenue the township receives. Updated information may also determine whether Portage is eligible for certain development grants.

"He was truly someone who took his job seriously," she said, noting that Mr. Stamper took time to mow lawns and beautify Curtis,

The municipality is going through its data to ensure that all names match address numbers, and to ensure that all new homes and their residents are accounted for, she said.

Members of the census bureau once went door to door to collect the information, but "now we are

doing it ourselves," she said, adding that local governments gather municipal data more efficiently, owing to board members' familiarity with their constituents.

"We are just getting started. It is a new process to involve local governments." Several townships in the Eastern Upper Peninsula have taken on the task, Mrs. McDonald said.

At last count, there were 1,055 residents in Portage Township. The local ambulance corps has completed and submitted the first draft of an updated policy and procedures manual, reported Brad Kohvacka, captain of the township's emergency medical service. The final draft should be done within 60 to 90 days, Mrs. McDonald said.

Meanwhile, the department's trainees, Robert Garnier and Mike Jago, have begun assisting first responders on emergency runs. Both are expected to begin serving as primary drivers this August.

Mr. Jago has completed his medical training and should be a licensed emergency medical technician (EMT) by fall, when Mr. Garnier begins medical training.

The township has received two

Youth's Can Drive Raises \$300 for Fulgenzis



Children collected returnable cans to benefit the Fulgenzi family of St. Ignace Thursday May 24, raising \$330 for the family, who lost their belongings and home in a fire in May. Pictured (back row, from left) are friends of the Fulgenzi children, Zack Major, Dillan Brown, Kelsey Closs, Jason Brown; (middle, from left) Kyle O'Brien, Jade Edleman, Callie Kammers; and (front) Kennedy Kammers. (Photograph courtesy of Sunshine Kammers)