

City Approves Fort de Buade Purchase Agreement

Terms Are Five Years, \$50,000 for Building

By Ryan Schlehuder

The collection of more than 2,000 historic and local artifacts in Fort de Buade Museum is much closer to becoming a permanent display in St. Ignace with the St. Ignace City Council's authorization of a five-year purchasing agreement totaling \$500,000 for the museum's building and gift shop property

Monday, July 16. The city expects to complete the agreement with the Benson family this week.

The city has also signed an agreement with the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians for \$708,000 to fund the purchase of Fort de Buade over the next six

years and has \$118,000 of that in hand to pay for the first year's installment. The remaining \$208,000 from the tribe will be used to pay financing and legal costs for the transactions and for artifact preservation and maintenance and operation of the museum, according to City Manager Eric Dodson.

City attorney Prentiss "Moie" Brown, Jr. is now working out details for the large artifacts collection from the Benson family. Marylan Benson will donate the museum collection to the city as part of the city's agreement to purchase the real estate, furnishings, and gift shop inventory. That way, she can get a tax write-off for the collection,

which is valued at \$500,000. Mr. Brown assured Council that the agreement with the Benson family will be finalized only when the city is sole owner of the museum collection.

The many artifacts that pertain to St. Ignace's long history were collected by Mrs. Benson's late husband, Dr. Donald Benson, who died in May 2005.

Upon closing the deal, the city will pay the full price to the Bensons and finance the purchase through the First National Bank of St. Ignace. To the bank, the city will make a \$100,000 down payment from the tribal money on hand, and

finance the remaining \$400,000 at 4.5% interest over five years. Council is allowing the payment schedule to be determined by the mayor, treasurer, and clerk. Interest over the course of the loan, if about \$100,000 is paid a year, will amount to about \$50,000.

The Bensons, said Mr. Dodson, had offered to finance the purchase at 5% over 30 years, but would have held the collection until the debt was paid, so the city worked out a way to gain title immediately.

The \$500,000 purchase price includes \$200,000 for the building and \$300,000 for the contents,

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Events Planned Next Week

Straits Area Will Mark Bridge 50th

Events planned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge will take place Thursday, July 26, through Saturday, July 28, at St. Ignace.

A new bridge token honoring bridge designer Dr. David B. Steinman will be dedicated Thursday, July 26, at 10 a.m. at Bridge View Park. Dr. Steinman will be featured on one side of the commuter token and the MBA's 50th anniversary logo will be on the reverse side.

Slide show presentations will be featured Friday, July 27, at noon and 2:30 p.m. at Little Bear East Community Center. Admission is free of charge, but seating will be limited, to view "50 Fabulous Years," a question-and-answer session, and "Memories of Mackinac" by ironworker Richard DeMara.

A 6 p.m. Friday reception and 7 p.m. banquet will be offered for ticket holders at Kewadin Casino on Mackinac Trail. At press time, banquet tickets are sold out.

A Saturday, July 28, parade will begin at 10:30 a.m. in St. Ignace and include puppets, tribal members in ceremonial regalia, horse-drawn carriages, marching bands, floats, high wheel bicycle riders, Miss Michigan and the National Cherry Queen, and 50 years of cars. The parade will cross the bridge and travel through downtown Mackinaw City at approximately 12:30 p.m.

Saturday afternoon events are planned at Bridge View Park in St. Ignace, including a display of the 50 parade convertibles. Great Lakes folk music will be performed at 1 p.m., rivet tossing and other ironworker skills will be demonstrated at 2:30 p.m., and a "Ironworkers/Building Trades Stories" program will be presented at 3:30 p.m. The dedication of the ironworkers/building trades memorial and statue will take place at 4:45 p.m., followed by a 5 p.m. flyover by the Michigan Air National Guard (tentative). Local service groups will have food booths and amateur radio operators will broadcast the event around the world. On display will be a 100-foot replica of the bridge made from Erector sets.

Saturday evening, fireworks will be fired into the air over the Straits from the east side of the bridge at both St. Ignace and Mackinaw City.

Other events are planned in St. Ignace for the celebration, including a tour of the U.S. Coast Guard lifeboat, a Fish Feast at the marina, a beer tent, and family activities. The team of Budweiser Clydesdales will visit St. Ignace, Mackinac Island, and Cedarville as part of the celebration. The team will take part in the parade and be available to see at Little Bear East Arena and Community Center in St. Ignace from Tuesday, July 24, through Monday, July 30. The horses will visit Cedarville Thursday, July 26.

Fish Feast To Highlight St. Ignace Heritage

Memorial Will Be Dedicated July 28

By Ryan Schlehuder

The St. Ignace Fish Feast, to be highlighted by a dedication of the new Fishermen's Memorial, will offer two days of activities to entertain families Friday, July 27, and Saturday, July 28, at the St. Ignace Marina. While the first Fish Feast is part of this year's 50th Mackinac Bridge anniversary celebration, the festival is planned to continue each year.

"This is an event for every local person, not just visitors, and not just for those who love fish," said Lynne Piippo, director of the St. Ignace Visitors Bureau. "This will be fun for the entire family."

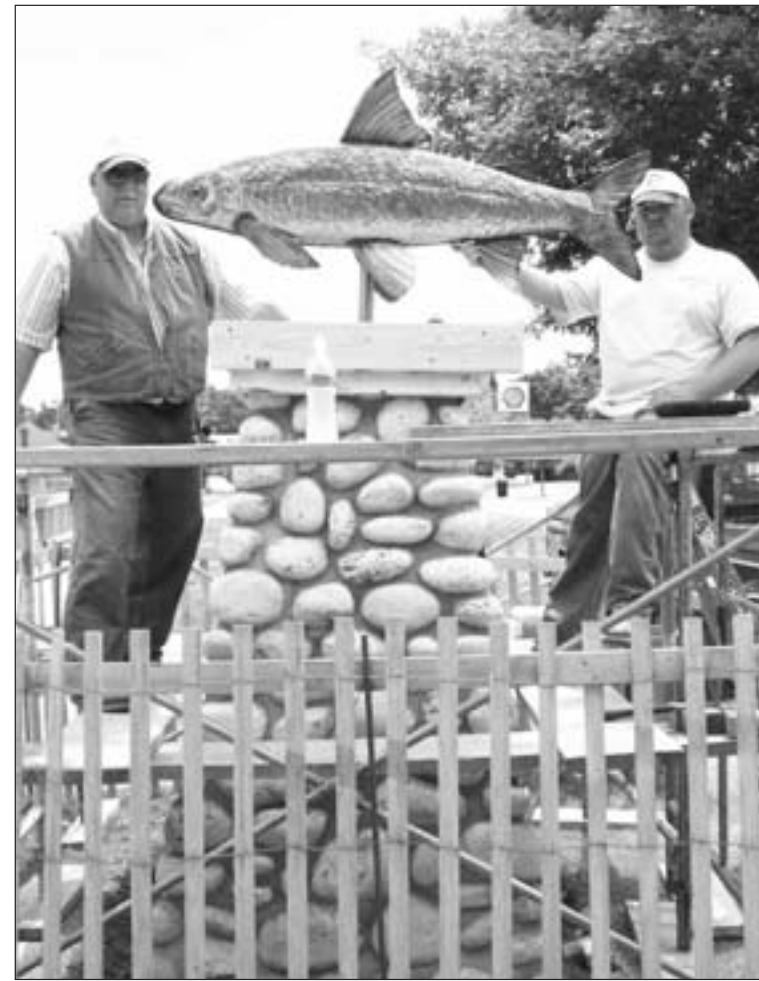
The Fish Feast is a joint effort among St. Ignace's Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and nonprofit organizations, and volunteers.

"The bridge anniversary celebration is the catalyst to this event, however, the Chamber has talked about doing something fish-related for a number of years," said Janet Peterson, director of the Chamber of Commerce. "It's a great event that highlights the area's fish history, industry, and its significance in the region."

The Fishermen's Memorial, newly constructed near the boardwalk between the St. Ignace Public Marina and Watawam Lighthouse, will be dedicated at 4 p.m. Saturday, July 28. Construction of the memorial was completed by Winberg Masonry of St. Ignace Friday, July 13.

The memorial, featuring two bronze plaques with names and a large metal whitefish that sits atop a stone foundation, pays tribute to the commercial fishermen in Mackinac County who have perished while fishing in Lakes Michigan and Huron.

Local volunteers, headed by



Eldon Winberg (left) and his son, Russell, of Winberg Masonry, put the finishing touches on the new Fishermen's Memorial in St. Ignace, a 48-pound stainless steel whitefish sculpture that was placed on top of a stone foundation Thursday, July 12. The memorial is dedicated to commercial fishermen who have lost their lives while fishing in Lakes Michigan and Huron. The memorial will be dedicated at 4 p.m. Saturday, July 28, during the Fish Feast.

Shirley Bentgen of St. Ignace, raised an estimated \$7,000 to build the memorial.

The new event will open with a musical performance by the Saints of Steel Drum Band at the marina at 4 p.m. Friday.

The U.S. Coast Guard Station St. Ignace will offer tours of its search and rescue boat both days at 6 p.m. at the marina.

On Saturday, at least six local food businesses will feature a favorite fish or seafood dish for Fish Feast participants. Hot dogs

and chips will also be available to children, provided by the Mackinac Animal Aid Association.

Children's games Saturday will include an inflatable bounce house, a fishing tank coordinated by the Straits Area Sportsmen's Club, face painting provided by Gros Cap School's Parent-Teacher Organization, and a Japanese T-shirt painting workshop called gyotaku (pronounced gee-oh-tah-ku), coordinated by

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School Board OKs Roof Work, New Carpet

Teacher Silet Retires

By Paul Gingras

Richard Silet has chosen to retire from St. Ignace Area Schools. His resignation was accepted by the school board Monday, July 9. Mr. Silet has been at LaSalle High School since 1969, where he taught metal shop, history, and civics. Superintendent Mike Springsteen described him as "an outstanding teacher" who devoted a great deal of time outside of regular classroom hours to students seeking to further themselves in metal work.

"Finding a replacement in the metal shop area will be a great challenge," Mr. Springsteen said in his report to the board.

School Board President Jane Weiss said she reluctantly accepted the resignation, noting that Mr. Silet has taken students to metal working competitions around the state, producing a host of winners throughout his career.

The board also accepted the resignation of alternative education teacher Jen Tallaire, who has left

her position to tend to family commitments, Mr. Springsteen said.

"I wish we could keep her," said Trustee Dave Latva, noting that Mrs. Tallaire was well respected and effective at the juvenile detention facility at St. Ignace, where she

taught.

In addition to these vacancies, the district will replace speech and language pathologist Liz DeWick, who recently retired. The district

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Suicide Prevention Group Forms in Mackinac County

By Paul Gingras

A group called "A Sense of Life" has formed to help prevent suicides. The group is seeking to increase its membership by inviting people interested in working on this complex and preventable problem to join them at a 7 p.m. meeting Thursday, August 16, at the St. Ignace Public Library.

At this and future meetings, the study group will assess current services in the area, discuss suicides that have occurred, and use the information to create a regional prevention plan that fits into the state's suicide prevention plan, said Geraldine Stelmaszek, prevention

coordinator for the Eastern Upper Peninsula Dispute Resolution Center. Doing so will help the group apply for a grant to develop its services.

The group plans to educate the community about the warning signs of potential suicide. Members plan to list warning signs on bookmarks and posters and offer presentations to area groups.

Mrs. Stelmaszek said she is not a counselor, medical doctor, or mental health expert on suicide, but has researched the subject.

"It is my understanding that people who are contemplating suicide

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Kelso Resigns Post as County Road Engineer

By Amy Polk

Engineer Manager Craig Kelso resigned from his position with the Mackinac County Road Commission Tuesday, July 10. Ten days before officially resigning from the road commission, he was offered the same position with the Schoolcraft County Road Commission. At its June 27 meeting, Schoolcraft County Road Commission voted 3-0 in favor of offering Mr. Kelso a job and the employment contract they negotiated with him. They accepted his signed contract July 11, said interim Schoolcraft County Road Commission manager Burt Vail.

In his letter to Mackinac County Road Commission, Mr. Kelso stated his "retirement" will be

effective 180 days from July 9, when the letter was dated.

Schoolcraft County Road Commission offered Mr. Kelso a base salary of \$90,480 with the potential for more. His salary will be finalized at Schoolcraft County Road Commission's next meeting July 25.

Mr. Kelso was scheduled to receive a salary of \$88,369.33 for 2007 and \$91,462.26 in 2008 as an employee of Mackinac County Road Commission. He also had the use of a vehicle for work and personal driving.

Schoolcraft County Road Commission has been without an engineer/manager since August 25, 2006, when it terminated the

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Budweiser Clydesdales Will Visit Straits Area Next Week

By Eric Fish

The Budweiser Clydesdales, which have represented the Anheuser-Busch company since 1933, will visit the Mackinac Straits area to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge beginning Monday, July 23. They will be featured in the Mackinac Bridge anniversary parade Saturday, July 28.

The horses will be available for public viewing at Little Bear East Arena in St. Ignace Monday, July 23, Tuesday, July 24, and Thursday, July 26, through Sunday, July 29. They will make several appearances in the area during the week, including on Mackinac Island Tuesday, July 24, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., in St. Ignace Wednesday, July 25, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and in

Cedarville Thursday, July 26, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. They will appear at Kewadin Casino in St. Ignace Friday, July 27, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The company has five traveling eight-horse hitches that make about 300 appearances annually.

The traveling hitch from San Antonio, Texas, will be trucked to St. Ignace Sunday, July 22, and be available for public viewing the next day. They'll be housed at Little Bear East Arena. The horses are always traveling and only make a few appearances in Michigan each year, said Bob Griffin Jr., co-owner of Griffin Beverage in St. Ignace. Anheuser-Busch receives thousands of requests for appearances each year.

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An eight-horse Budweiser Clydesdale hitch parades through the countryside, towing the traditional red and white Budweiser wagon. The Clydesdales will be in the Mackinac Straits area starting July 23 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge. They're scheduled to appear on Mackinac Island, in St. Ignace, and in Cedarville. (Anheuser-Busch photograph)

Coming Next Week...

Mackinac Bridge Anniversary Issue

The St. Ignace News will publish a special issue commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge. The tabloid-size newspaper will be inserted in all copies of The St. Ignace News Thursday, July 26, to coincide with celebrations in St. Ignace and Mackinaw City.