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Chief Wawatam Engine To Be Returned to St. Ignace

By Karen Gould

Two city preservation projects have received the support of the St. Ignace Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Last week, the DDA welcomed an offer for one of the engines from the *Chief Wawatam* railroad ferry and agreed to pay fuel costs to bring it here. The

authority also began the bidding process to paint the inside of the Museum of Ojibwa Culture and decided to apply for a loan that may be needed to pay for additional renovation work on the 171-year-old

former Catholic church building that houses the museum.

If the St. Ignace City Council approves the gift of the 65-ton *Wawatam* engine next week, it could be delivered by the end of the

month. One of two stern steam engines that once helped power the *Chief Wawatam* is being donated to the city by Purvis Marine, the Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, company that converted the ferry to a barge in the

mid-1980s.

The 338-foot, coal-fired ice-breaking ferry sailed between St. Ignace and Mackinaw City from 1911 through 1984, transporting trains, passengers, and automobiles across the Straits of Mackinac.

Purvis Marine will keep the second 14-foot-tall stern engine. The ship's bow engine is on display at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc.

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Hessel Lot Rezoning Is Suggested

Move May Open Door to Shore Strip Development

By Amy Polk

Clark Township Planning Commission opened the first door to allowing commercial development on the east side of Mertaugh Boatworks in Hessel, where owners were denied permission to build a 6,000-square-foot boathouse on Lot 55 in October 2007.

Brad Koster of Hessel requested permission to rezone Lot 55, changing its use from shore strip to commercial, Tuesday, January 8. Commissioners elected 7-1 to recommend rezoning the lot to commercial, but, before the lot is rezoned, it needs Mackinac County Planning Commission and Clark Township Board of Trustees approval.

A subsequent request from Hessel Bay Boat Works to amend the list of commercial uses and add "marina/booyard and boathouse for marina or booyard use" to the list was tabled. Commissioners rescheduled a hearing on the request until the February 12 meeting so they could get more information.

The lot is now zoned "shore strip," a designation that limits the land use to "no structures other than auxiliary to the use of the lake

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This is one of the three engines taken from the *Chief Wawatam*, which once served on the Straits of Mackinac as a railroad ferry. Purvis Marine in Sault Ste. Marie, Canada, now operating the ferry as a barge, is donating one of the ferry's 65-ton engines to St. Ignace. The gift was announced during the Downtown Development Authority meeting Friday, January 11. George Alward of Cedarville (pictured) proposed the idea to St. Ignace, said DDA Chairman Gene Elmer. (Photograph courtesy of George Alward)

Ice Use by Non-hockey Events Questioned

By Ryan Schlehuder

Questions were raised at a St. Ignace Recreation Advisory Com-

mittee meeting Wednesday, January 9, over booking non-rental events at Little Bear East Ice Arena during

open weekends. Scott Winkelman, president of the St. Ignace Hockey Association, questioned why an event like the broomball tournament, a fundraiser for the city's Recreation Department that was scheduled for January 5, was to be played on the ice rink when it could be played outside, allowing the city to rent the ice that day.

The city waived the rental fee, since the event was designed to raise money to help keep the facility solvent.

The tournament was canceled, but has been rescheduled for Saturday, March 8, at the ice rink. Last year, the tournament was played on the parking lot of the Driftwood Sports Bar.

At its meeting, the committee considered keeping the ice rink open for possible hockey game bookings or inviting other events to book the facility during open weekends. Committee members agreed that the goal is to avoid having the ice rink empty on weekends, but no action was taken on a suggestion that the booking system needs to be revised.

Hockey teams use the ice from October until mid-March and Mr.

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56 Animals Seized From Farm; Neglect Charged



Fifty-six animals, including seven llamas, were seized from a Rexton farm by Mackinac County Animal Control Thursday, January 10, owing to neglect. Corey and Mariah Cole were among volunteers to temporarily shelter the animals until the case is heard in 92nd District Court. (Photographs by Wendy Frosland)

By Ryan Schlehuder

Fifty-six animals were seized from a Rexton farm by the Mackinac County Animal Control Thursday, January 10, owing to neglect. The charge will be made in the 92nd District Court in St. Ignace. A preliminary hearing date has yet to be set.

Wendy Frosland, Mackinac County's animal control officer, aided by Luce County Animal Control, seized 17 horses, 12 goats, nine dogs, seven llamas, four donkeys, three bobcats, two porcupines, and two pigs.

Mrs. Frosland said she had been working with the owner for more than a year but had to take legal action after a Manistique farrier made a complaint after visiting the farm to tend to the horses.

Most of the animals are frail and thin and almost half of them are impregnated, Mrs. Frosland said. One dog had to be euthanized and several more are so sick they will probably have to be killed, too.

"It is the worst case of animal neglect Mackinac County has ever seen," said Mrs. Frosland. "They were living in their own feces, and the donkeys have never seen the

light of day."

The hooves of all of the donkeys and most of the horses are foundered (inflamed) and overgrown. All of the animals were kept in pens.

None of the animals are rabid and there were no signs of physical abuse, other than not being fed or given proper health care, said Mrs. Frosland.

Until the district court rules otherwise, all of the animals have been temporarily relocated in Newberry, St. Ignace, and Trout Lake, and all of them have received or will receive veterinary care. The two pigs are at the Mackinac County Animal Shelter.

If the owner is found guilty Mrs. Frosland will have to find new owners for all of the animals.

"We can't relocate them until after the case is done, but I'm looking for adoptive owners as we speak," she said Monday evening.

Donations for the animals' care can be made to the Mackinac County Animal Shelter. Send donations to 980 Cheeseman Road, St. Ignace, Michigan 49781. Call 643-7646 for more information.

Outhouse Race To Highlight Mackinaw City Winterfest

Activities Planned for This Weekend

By Paul Gingras

The 15th annual Mackinaw City Winterfest will celebrate northern Michigan winter Thursday, January 17, through Saturday, January 19, in any weather. The third annual outhouse race, a colorful event that has become one of Winterfest's main attractions, is expected to proceed at 2 p.m. Saturday at Shepler's Ferry parking lot.

There has been a surge of interest in the race this year, said Dawn Edwards of the Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce.

"This is going to be one of our biggest races," she said.

More participants have registered to run outhouses this year than last.

"I'm painting one right now," said organizer and racer Greg Yoder Thursday, January 10. One week before the race, registration had reached 12, double the number of participants in the 2007 race.

It was Mr. Yoder who brought the idea to Mackinaw City.

While listening to the radio in 2005, Mr. Yoder and friends heard of an outhouse race planned in Sault Ste. Marie. Intrigued, they souped up a deer blind, showed up, and raced it.

It was so much fun, he said, that they decided to have their

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January Thaw: It Didn't Last Long

Fog, rain, and warm temperatures took their toll on Mackinac Island's snow Tuesday, January 8. As snow disappeared, bikes were uncovered and snowmobiles were temporarily tucked under the sidewalk canopy of the Chippewa Hotel on Main Street as these workers took to foot and bicycle on their way to the Arnold Dock to take the 4:30 p.m. *Huron* to St. Ignace. By Friday, abundant snow had returned and snowmobiles are now back in operation across the Eastern U.P.