

The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave



"Upbuilder of the Home - Nourisher of the Community Spirit - Arts, Letters and Science of the Common People."

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Community Rallies To Grant Christmas Wishes

By Karen Gould

The squeak of snow under tires could be heard along nearly deserted streets in St. Ignace before dawn Saturday, December 20. With temperatures in the single digits and snow falling steadily, volunteers made their way to the north and south ends of town, meeting at two locations. Each group, more than 30 volunteers in total, were there to assist those who need extra help

providing food and gifts for their families this holiday season.

"I just really appreciate it," said Ulysses Sistruck of St. Ignace, the father of three. He earns less than \$10 an hour, and his wife is laid off. He was looking for Christmas gifts for his children early Saturday at

Community Action Agency.

The gifts were free.

About \$5,000 worth of gifts for children were available to those in need, said volunteer Wendy Colegrove of St. Ignace, and all items were donated by community members.

Mrs. Colegrove headed the Mackinac County Toy Drive with Sally Hazen, also of St. Ignace. Community Action Agency offered use of its building for distribution of the collected gifts.

Spread over tables that filled the main dining room at the Reagon

Street agency were toys for all ages, clothing, games, dolls, cars, books, and stocking stuffers.

More than 275 children benefited from the Christmas gifts. Families were allowed to choose four to five gifts per child. Wrapping paper and tape also were available.

The program makes it possible for families to have presents for their children, said Mrs. Colegrove.

"We didn't know what we were going to do, really," said Mr. Sistruck.

His family also has had to rely on help from St. Ignace Area Hope, the St. Ignace Food Pantry, and other

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Clark Township DDA Plans To Go Before Public in Jan.

By Jonathan Eppley

The Clark Township trustees, meeting Thursday, December 18, worked to finalize arrangements for a public hearing on a downtown development authority (DDA) that has been set for Thursday, January 8. The hearing will be at the Clark Township Community Center on M-134 at 7 p.m.

DDA exploration committee member Ken Drenth gave a presentation similar to the one to be given at the public hearing, which outlines the proposed DDA boundaries and a draft ordinance.

The township cannot approve the ordinance to form a DDA until 60 days after the public hearing. That 60 days is to allow property owners inside the proposed boundaries to opt out of the program, taxing units to opt out of having their taxes captured, and make any subsequent changes to the boundaries. Most businesses in Hessel and Cedarville are included in the proposed district, Mr. Drenth said.

The proposed boundaries can be made smaller, but not bigger, after the public hearing, said Township Clerk Mike Miller.

"That's why they went big to start out with," he said.

A DDA is a municipal tool to finance and promote economic development.

If the DDA ordinance is enacted, Supervisor Gerald Hill will appoint eight to 12 people, subject to township board approval, to govern the DDA. Its budget, however, is subject to the approval of the township board.

DDA meetings would be open to the public, with minutes available to the public.

The DDA would be able to raise funds through loans, grants, donations, and tax increment financing authority (TIFA).

A TIFA captures the taxable growth of properties within the DDA boundaries. For instance, if the taxable value of a commercial building goes up because of improvements made to it, the taxes resulting from that increased value could be applied to DDA programs and operations.

Taxpayers would not pay any more taxes under a DDA than they otherwise would, but, under a TIFA, some of the taxes they do pay could be funneled to a DDA, Mr. Drenth said.

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Packing boxes of food for those in need are volunteers from St. Ignace Moose Lodge 999, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter crew members from the *Biscayne Bay*, Glen's employees, and other community volunteers. The group packed and delivered boxes Saturday, December 20. Pictured are (from left, standing) Shawn Pelon, Jason McCall, Roger Childers, Howard Everson, Robert Conguy, Jason Fisher, Francis Bellant, Ron Wartella, Dale Hess, John Gold, Robert St. Andrew, Quentin Goudreau, Louis Conguy, Ken Hardy, Eric Pederson, Cary Godwin; (kneeling, back row) Brandon Underwood, Kyle Decker, Joshua Zike, Cliff Newberry, Anita Marshall, Cally Klimczak, Patrice Mackin; (kneeling, front) Donna Robach, Arleta Pope, Dawn Nelson, Dale Nelson, and Mike Desormeaux. Missing from photograph are Jim Kelly, John Ellis, and Branden Prout.

\$5.2 Million Road Budget Set; 5-Year Plans Approved

By Karen Gould

The Mackinac County Road Commission approved a \$5.2 million budget for 2009 and a five-year plan for work on select township roads using state and federal funds totaling about \$2.4 million. Both were adopted following two public hearings by the Road Commission Tuesday, December 16.

The 2009 budget has little change in comparison to 2008, \$5.8 million budget. Most of the difference is attributable to salt shed constructed near the East District garage last year. This year, the commission has no plans to purchase equipment or construct any buildings.

At Tuesday's meeting, the road commission also amended the 2008 budget to account for increase maintenance costs, largely owing to the long, harsh winter.

Faced with less state and federal gas tax revenue, the commission has already begun making cutbacks, said Commissioner Lester Livermore. At best, he said, the commission needs to plan for at least a 6% reduction in funding for road maintenance for the next several years.

"We're looking at significant cutbacks," he said. "We already started some of that with notifications on winter maintenance levels. We're definitely in a time when we're going to have to start tightening our belt more, and obviously that means . . . reduced services."

The reduced revenue also could impact the number of employees, he said, and residents will notice significantly fewer trucks on the road this summer.

"Last year we didn't bring some of the seasonals [workers] back, and the

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City Moves To Prevent Monopoly Bicycle Rental Licenses Capped at 24% on Island

By Ryan Schlehuder

To prevent a monopoly in the bicycle rental business, the City of Mackinac Island has limited the number of licenses one person can own to 24% of the total licenses issued. At a meeting Wednesday, December 17, Council approved a recommendation by its Ordinance Committee to implement the cap, which is also intended to allow transfer of licenses from owner to owner with Council's consent, and allow Council to continue to control where bicycles are being rented.

The Ordinance Committee, which met earlier this month, recommended Council choose a cap

percentage between 20% and 24%. Councilman Armin Porter, one of the members of the committee who suggested keeping the cap at 20%, spoke first on the topic Wednesday and decided 24% was efficient; the other council members agreed.

Council issued 1,330 bicycle licenses among 13 rental businesses this year.

A commercial bicycle license, issued through the city, costs \$20 a year. With 1,330 licenses issued this year, the city is collecting \$26,600 from bicycle licenses, which is placed in the city's general fund.

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Decoration Winners at Les Cheneaux



Rhonda Dutton and Mary McLain won first place in the Les Cheneaux Chamber of Commerce residential category of the 2008 Holiday Decoration Contest, for decorating 3650 North Webb Road in Hessel. The decorations include lights on trees and hanging from the roof, as well as an inflatable "Grinch."



At left: Viking Boat Harbor, at 1121 Islington Road in Cedarville, won first place in the dock and boat-house category.



The Les Cheneaux branch of First National Bank of St. Ignace, on Meridian Street in Cedarville, won first place in the commercial category.

HOLIDAY HOURS
 The St. Ignace News office will be closed Thursday, December 25, and Friday, December 26, in observance of Christmas.

Deadline January 1 Issue:
 Display advertising deadline - Monday, December 29, 10 a.m.
 Classified advertising, 1 p.m.

The office will reopen at 8 a.m. Monday, December 29.