

Schoenborn Shares Goals as He's Hired To Head LMAS Health Department

By Karen Gould

Brian Schoenborn of St. Ignace has been hired as the new health officer for the LMAS District Health Department, which includes Luce, Mackinac, Alger, and Schoolcraft counties, with offices in St. Ignace, Newberry, Munising, and Manistique. The department also provides home health care and hospice services to Delta and Menominee counties.

Mr. Schoenborn, 46, has spent his career in community health and has more than 15 years experience as a health service administrator, most recently as a senior administrator for Butterworth Continuing Care Group in Grand Rapids, where he worked from 1994 to 2001. For the past five years, he has served as radiology and laboratory technician at the Mackinac Island Medical Center.

He holds state and federal licenses as a nursing home administrator.

Mr. Schoenborn earned an associate's degree in radiology technology in 1982 from St. Mary's College in Grand Rapids and a bachelor's degree in health systems management and finance in 1986 from Ferris State University.

As director of the district health department, Mr. Schoenborn said he is willing to spend long hours on the job. His goals include establishing a good working relationship with the



staff, careful oversight of spending, and promoting the educational services the department offers in the community.

His views on health care admin-

istration are non-traditional, he said.

"I play a support role to my staff's efforts," he said. "If I'm doing my job correctly, their job may not be easier, but more effec-

At left: Brian Schoenborn, new LMAS health officer, steps into the laboratory at the St. Ignace office on Hombach Street Friday, January 16.

tive."

He replaces Marv Henderson, who was terminated from the position in May. David Martin, the Chippewa County Environmental Health director, served as the interim health officer.

In his first four weeks on the job, Mr. Schoenborn has been traveling throughout the district, meeting with staff to create an environment where they can do their best work, he said. Providing personal and compassionate care is a part of the daily jobs of many staff members, said Mr. Schoenborn, and that takes place more successfully in the right atmosphere.

Mr. Schoenborn said the staff is looking for consistency and leadership. He wants to make sure the department's 108 employees understand the importance of their role in contributing to the overall mission of the organization. That mission, he said, is to be committed to health and the prevention of disease.

Mr. Schoenborn was one of five people interviewed for the position by the LMAS board of directors.

"He's top of the game," said

Dawn Nelson of St. Ignace, the vice-chair. "He's exactly what we need."

The four counties that comprise the health department have a combined population of more than 35,500 people and the district covers 4,200 square miles.

"It's not a large population center but, geographically, a lot of square miles," said Mr. Schoenborn, "which inherently represents a challenge."

The department is one of 44 health departments in Michigan.

In his new job, Mr. Schoenborn will focus on careful spending for the health department.

LMAS operates on a \$6.5 million budget, and funding is very limited right now, he said. He prefers to look at cutting costs that are not related to clients, and to retain jobs that help people.

Trimming costs is a balancing act, he said, although it can be done within reason, without impacting client services, and still lead to long-term stability.

"I feel confident that we can do a good job," he said. "We're at a period of time in the State of Michigan where it's tight right now. It's extremely tight. Funding is limited. The success or failure is how you take a very limited amount of dollars and make them go as far as possible."

He added, "There's no wiggle

room. There's no room for waste. Utilization of resources, whether it be personnel resources or supply resources, is extremely important."

Some services offered receive some revenue from the state and federal governments, although not all, including addiction counseling.

"Other services are not mandated by the state, but we have decided as an agency that they have a very important social role. If we don't supply them, who will? Does the population within the area we serve need them? Absolutely," he said.

Some services are paid for by clients on a sliding rate scale that takes into account their income.

Balancing a budget by looking for additional revenue is more difficult, he said, although typically more successful in the long term. The agency receives some funding through grants from the Department of Environmental Quality.

Within the next year, Mr. Schoenborn would like to help raise awareness in the community of the screening and educational programs the department offers. He wants people to see LMAS not as much as an enforcement agency, but as a resource in the prevention of disease. The health department offers breast and cervical cancer screening, HIV and AIDS testing and

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Mackinac Island Historic Landmark Status City Planners Push for Progress by Study Group

By Ryan Schlehuder

A letter of encouragement to pursue ways to protect Mackinac Island's historic structures will be sent by the city's Planning Commission to the city council and to each of the five members of a recently established historic preservation committee that has yet to hold a meeting on the issue.

This fall, Mayor Margaret Doud appointed five members to a committee to study the city's weakened National Historic Landmark (NHL) status. The committee's ultimate charge is to create historic districts and guidelines that developers and city administrators can follow to maintain buildings that contribute to the city's National Historic Landmark status.

The study committee, said its chairman, Michael Hart, has been unable to meet owing to members being absent from the Island this winter.

Committee members include Mr. Hart, also a city council member, Planning Commission Chairman Bob Brown, Grand Hotel President Dan Musser III, Brad Chambers of

Mackinac Island Carriage Tours, and Phil Porter, director of Mackinac State Historic Parks.

Toward the end of a regular Planning Commission meeting Tuesday, January 13, Commissioner Trish Martin questioned why the committee had not met and asked to urge the committee to meet and begin planning, as the Island's summer tourism season nears.

Commissioner Jim Pettit agreed that plans have to begin as soon as possible.

"If we lollygag on this, there's going to be another historic building that goes down," he said. "We've got to protect what we have from leaving us. That's why are we are losing our status."

Some residents of Hubbard's Annex were also appointed by the mayor last fall to seek independent historic landmark status for that neighborhood, and it already has submitted a list of more than 70 items and photographs of structures and landmarks in the Annex to support that goal.

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Mackinaw City

Roof Replacement, New Ambulance in 2009 Plans

By Jonathan Eppley

The Mackinaw City Village Planning Commission is recommending that the Village Council adopt its capital improvement plan, a document that reviews the village's projected infrastructure and equipment needs for the next five years. The plan helps the village council decide how to allocate funds for equipment or facilities that have an estimated life greater than five years and cost more than \$5,000.

In developing the document, the village is "basically trying to forecast, as best we can, what improvements are needed," Village Manager Jeff Lawson said.

The planning commission made the recommendation at its Thursday, January 22 meeting.

The capital improvement plan, which used in budgeting decisions, covers "primary areas from roads, water, sewer, parks and recreation, and vehicle purchases," Mr. Lawson said.

Projects outlined in the plan for 2009 include \$3,000 to replace heaters in the village hall garage, \$6,000 to paint, remove carpet, and refinish the floors in the clerk and treasurer's offices, \$25,000 to replace the roof of the fire station, \$80,000 for water and wastewater maintenance projects to include meter replacement and valve repairs, \$33,000 for a new four-wheel-drive police vehicle, and \$120,000 for a new ambulance.

"I think it's a great idea to get planning involved with it, it helps us

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Clark Twp. Board To Ask Attorney Who Is Responsible for Grinder Pump Repairs

The Clark Township Sewer Advisory Board wants to know if the township or the homeowner is responsible for problems with grinder pumps and has asked the township board to get a legal opinion.

Some pumps are cracking when melted snow freezes inside them, said Township Supervisor Gerald Hill, and the township is looking into outfitting some grinders with wood or canvas covers to prevent melted snow from getting inside

the pumps.

The sewer board, which met Thursday, January 22, postponed action on a recent sewer financial and rate study. Township Clerk Mike Miller said the sewer board wants to review the study for more clarification before taking any action.

"There is no rush," he said; "it just needs to be addressed before the next billing cycle."

That will be done at its Thursday, February 26, meeting.

Ice Tower Classic To Benefit Historic Village



The Mackinaw City municipal building on South Huron Avenue is nearly hidden by the ice tower this year, as seen Saturday, January 24. "It is very, very big and strong," said Bill Marvin, who is heading up the second annual "Ice Tower Classic" contest. This is one of the bigger towers the city has seen in years, he said. The city has had the tower for a number of years, and it has now become part of a fundraiser, with half of the proceeds going to the contest winner and half to benefit the Historic Village project of the Mackinaw Area Historical Society. With the purchase of a ticket for \$5, people can guess when the tower will melt this spring; last year, it melted April 24. An electronic timing device has been embedded at the base of the ice fountain to record the melting time. Tickets are available by calling Bill Marvin at (231) 436-4006, or visiting one of the following businesses: Candy Corner, Mackinaw Pastie and Cookie Company, Mackinaw Outfitters, Coffman Hardware, Keyhole Bar, Holiday Inn Express, Audie's Restaurant, Mackinaw Building Center, Hamilton Inn, JR's Tailgate Pub, Pancake Chef, and Dixie Saloon.

Mackinaw City Wants Native American Center

Seeks Mackinac County Support for Energy Festival

By Karen Gould

A Native American Cultural Center should be in Mackinaw City, say Village leaders, who approved a resolution supporting the project at their Wednesday, January 21 meeting. A nine-member committee, yet to be appointed, would determine the scope of the project, which could range from 20 acres up to 600 acres. Costs for establishing such a center are estimated to be from \$15 to \$20 million.

"We're looking at something like National Park quality," said Village President Ron Wallin.

Approval of the resolution, he said, demonstrates Council's commitment to the project. Based on the history of the area, said Mr. Wallin, "We want it here. It deserves to be here."

He added, "I think if Mackinaw doesn't do this, somebody else is going to."

Similar proposals have recently been discussed by groups in St. Ignace and Cheboygan, as part of economic development efforts in those towns.

Mr. Wallin, who offered the resolution, said a nine-member planning committee would include three tribe-appointed members, with one member each from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, and the Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. The remaining six committee members would be appointed by Mr. Wallin and confirmed by

Council. One council member would serve as a liaison to the committee.

Funds for the project would come from outside sources, he said, and not the city or tribes.

"I won't even consider asking the tribes for any money," said Mr. Wallin. "There are a lot of people in this country with a lot of money, and they need venues to spend it on, and we have to find the people and reach out to them. That talent exists around here."

Council agreed to provide funds for incidental expenses, including paper, postage stamps, and envelopes, although no budget was established during the meeting.

Also, with the aim of seeking the cooperation and participation of three Straits area counties, the village council approved a resolution endorsing a Green Energy Festival and Conference to be held in May. Council members said they would like to work with Mackinac, Emmet, and Cheboygan county leaders and will seek a delegate from each county to serve on the event planning committee.

The Village hosted a similar conference in 2006, without outside county support. It drew about 90 area community leaders who heard presentations on renewable energy, including wind turbines and solar power, and more efficient power consumption, such as new developments in street lighting.

Bill Shepler wants to purchase village property adjacent to the

wastewater treatment plant on Trails End Road for boat storage for his marine business. Council agreed to seek an appraisal of the land, although no commitment was made to sell all or part of the lot.

The lot is about 550 feet wide by 650 feet deep and Mr. Shepler, who did not attend the meeting, is interested in half of the parcel for boat storage, said Village Manager Jeff Lawson.

The land is not needed for future expansion of the wastewater treatment plant, said Mr. Lawson. The Village already owns about 100 acres behind the plant for expansion.

Mr. Wallin questioned how boat storage could help the community with economic development and employment, which the Village should consider.

Mr. Lawson said he had discussed job creation with Mr. Shepler, who told him the land would help the company maintain its marine operation and possibly expand that business.

Once council has the appraisal, and if it decides to move forward with the sale, a private sale ordinance would have to be approved, said Mr. Lawson.

Council members agreed to provide financial support to Wawatam Township to cover 37.5% of legal fees the township will incur from two tax tribunal cases. Mackinaw City Public Schools also is considering paying 37.5% and the township would cover 25% of the attorney fees.

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More Sand Ordered for County Roads

By Karen Gould

More road sand is needed in Mackinac County, as supplies are running low in a winter that arrived early, bringing with it a mix of snow, wind, bitter cold, and freezing rain. Mackinac County road commissioners, meeting Tuesday, January 20, approved spending up to \$10,000 to replenish sand at the East District Garage.

Also during the meeting, the commission denied a request to plow two miles of Castle Rock Road to the old railroad grade. The stretch is considered a seasonal road.

A letter from the St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce said the Straits Area Snowmobile Club sought the plowing. The plowed area would serve as parking for snowmobilers seeking trail access.

Road Commission manager Dirk Heckman said he had contacted the city and township, which were not interested in having the road plowed.

"It's not just plowing two miles of road," he said; "there's a nasty hill and curve right at the very end of it. You could probably put a half-load of sand on the hill just about every day. That's a heck of an expense to the road commission."

Commissioner Frank Luepnitz said the road was plowed in past years, but Little Bear East Arena in St. Ignace now offers a lighted parking lot for snowmobilers right at the snowmobile trailhead. The site also is near local restaurants and other services, so it benefits the community, unlike the remote Castle Rock Road site, the commission said.

Mr. Heckman will look at four trucks that are being offered for sale by Schoolcraft County and to purchase up to two of the vehicles. If they are purchased, the money would have to come from the contingency fund, since no funds were allocated in the year's budget for capital equipment. The cost is not expected to be more than \$18,000 per truck, Mr. Heckman said. They would cost more than \$100,000 new, he noted.

The trucks are 1996 single-axle vehicles, each with between 70,000 and 90,000 miles of use. The commission is considering the purchase because it fears it will spend about \$10,000 repairing its older trucks.

Work on approximately two miles of Pleasant Avenue in Garfield Township is estimated to cost \$600,000. The road will receive a sand and gravel lift from McKelvey Road to Patzer Road. Bids for the project will be opened in February, said Mr. Heckman.

Also in Garfield Township, in Gilcrest, H-40 will be resurfaced from the bridge north and west 1.5

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