

# City Says Projects Are Ready for Federal Stimulus Dollars

**Funds:** From page 1

hall, the city would like to re-engineer the corner and is seeking stimulus funding for both projects.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is contributing to the paving of Chambers Street, which now may also be eligible for stimulus funding.

Paving up to 10 miles of city streets could be covered by stimulus funds.

The \$3.2 million Portage Street sewer project could be eligible for up to a 50% grant or 50% loan principle reduction.

The \$3.7 million improvement project at the wastewater treatment facilities, now funded by a 20-year loan from the Michigan Clean Water State Revolving Fund, could be eligible for a 50% loan principle reduction.

The \$800,000 pond reconfiguration at the wastewater treatment facility, also currently financed through the State Revolving Fund, could receive a 50% loan principle reduction.

A water pipe that runs beneath business loop I-75 near the post

office needs to be replaced.

Sewer pipe replacement is needed all along business loop I-75 on North State Street near all of the hotels.

The Downtown Development Authority is seeking stimulus money to complete refurbishing work at the Museum of Ojibwa Culture.

About \$54 million is needed to complete the 75-mile North Huron Scenic Pathway connecting St. Ignace to Drummond Island.

In other business, at 129% over budget, the city now is dipping into the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) contingency fund for snowplowing.

Through a contract with MDOT, the city received \$51,176 for plowing the state trunkline from October 2008 through October of this year. The funds were exhausted last month.

"Hopefully winter is over, but I have a feeling it's probably not," said Mr. Dodson.

The street will be plowed, say council members.

"We're obligated to provide a

service to the people of this town," said Councilman Paul Fullerton. "Somehow we're going to continue to do that and fund it — if we have to borrow the money. We're not going to start cutting services, if I have anything to do with it."

The city is working with MDOT on two separate improvement projects on business loop I-75. The roadway will be resurfaced and raised about eight inches, beginning at the overpass and ending at High Street. Work on the \$1.3 million project will begin this summer. In the summer of 2010, a similar project will be undertaken near the row of hotels on the northern end of the business loop.

The city has a vision for the streetscape along the business loop, said Mr. Dodson, and will be performing in-kind work of removing some of the "clutter" there by burying above-ground power lines this spring. Eventually, said Mr. Dodson, the plan is to have a consis-

tent appearance along the corridor, with the same street lighting and walkways all along the business loop. The plan is to make the corridor more inviting and appealing to residents and visitors.

Bayside Music Festival, a new summer event planned for Saturday, August 15, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., received support from council. A resolution passed by council approves the closing of South State Street, which is the I-75 bypass, from Spring Street to Truckey Street. The resolution is pending Michigan Department of Transportation's approval to close the section of roadway.

The bus station construction is on schedule and siding is expected to be added this week. The city also will begin the bidding process for the inside furnishings, with the idea of seeking local vendors.

Council next meets Monday, March 16, at 8 p.m. at Little Bear East Arena.

## Michigan Politics

By  
George Weeks



### Obama Touts Great Lakes Funding

The Granholm administration and environmentalists are euphoric about the \$475 million that President Obama's tight budget includes for Great Lakes funding, and what Lisa Jackson, his Environmental Protection Agency boss, said last week about the lakes.

But a word of caution: The Bush administration, including assorted EPA leaders, made undelivered great promises about the Great Lakes during economic times that were not as grim, and with deficits not as staggering, as those facing Obama.

"President Obama is keeping his promise to protect and restore the Great Lakes because he knows that it will create jobs and help our economy recover," said Lieutenant Governor John Cherry, immediate past chairman of the Ann Arbor-based Great Lakes Commission. "As the Great Lakes state, Michigan welcomes the President's leadership. We urge Congress to support the proposal."

Congress could be the rub. In the competition for limited funds, the rust/water belt states have declining clout on Capitol Hill, compared to the states to the south and the west that have faster growth.

Jeff Skelding, campaign director of Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, hailed Obama's "unprecedented investment of \$475 Million in his Fiscal Year 2010 Budget to restore the Great Lakes — an effort that is key to creating jobs and growing our economy."

He called it "the largest, most serious commitment to Great Lakes restoration in a president's budget in history. Additionally, there could be as much as \$1 billion in other Great Lakes Restoration funding provided to the Great Lakes states through increased funding for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs."

Coalition members praised new EPA administrator Lisa Jackson for her remarks on the lakes at last week's meeting of the Great Lakes Commission in Washington, D.C. "Declaring the EPA was 'back on the job,' she affirmed the Obama Administration's commitment to the Great Lakes — from fixing old sewers to reviewing policy on invasive species," according to Jordan Lubetkin, regional communications manager for the National Wildlife Federation in Ann Arbor.

She vowed the new administration will reconsider the general permit and rules the Bush administration announced in December for oceangoing cargo ships entering the lakes. Acknowledging criticism that the rules fail to prevent entry of invasive species, she said the permit "doesn't begin to address some of the concerns that are out there."

According to the Associated Press, she said: "I don't have an answer for you today but I want you to know that's very much on my radar screen."

That's a start.

**Party Chairs**  
It's the scrapper vs the diplomat. Democrats have just given a seventh two-year term to feisty State Chairman Mark Brewer, who, thanks to organized labor, survived a 2003 attempt by newly-elected Governor Jennifer Granholm to

oust him. He became influential in the national party, including a lengthy stint as chairman of the national association of Democratic state chairs.

Republicans replaced combative Republican State Chairman Saul Anuzis, who made a spirited but failed bid to chair the Republican National Committee, with Ron Weiser of Ann Arbor, a self-made real estate millionaire, former U.S. ambassador to the Slovak Republic, 1999-2000 Michigan chairman of George W. Bush for President, and 2007-2008 national co-chair of John McCain for President.

Before his election, he told *The Detroit News* regarding the state party's need for change after dismal election results in 2008:

"If you have a business and it's losing money, it doesn't matter how well it's run: You have to change or it's gone. And in the Republican Party, our profit is winning. We haven't been winning, so we have to make changes in the way we do things."

In returning my phone call, Weiser, who left the country for a long-planned family island vacation after his election, said Saturday that he plans in April or May to visit the Upper Peninsula.

He also said that ex-Representative Tom Casperson of Escanaba will serve full time as the state party representative in the Upper Peninsula and the northern lower. Casperson, who was the 2008 GOP challenger of U.S. Representative Bart Stupak (D-Menominee), has been mentioned as a 2010 contender for the seat now held by term-limited Senator Michael Prusi (D-Ishpeming).

Brewer, who recently toured the U.P., disputed Weiser as an agent of change, and criticized his contributions to Capitol Hill Republicans who "stabbed Michigan's auto-workers in the back by leading GOP efforts to block assistance for Michigan's auto companies in December."

Sharon Wise of Traverse City, who was the 1997-2004 Michigan Republican National Committee-woman and is a close Weiser family friend, was selected as co-chair of the state party to replace Jane Abraham, wife of ex-Chairman Spencer Abraham (later U.S. Senator and Energy Secretary).

Weiser said Wise, who serves part time as a district representative for U.S. Representative Dave Camp (R-Midland), also will be a part time representative of the party.

In the absence of Weiser, Wise gave the Michigan GOP reaction to President Obama's first address to Congress:

"It is my hope that the president will refine the focus of his economic policies on lowering taxes for the American people and creating more private sector jobs, as he promised to do throughout the 2008 campaign. Such policies represent the way forward for Michigan's economy, and I firmly believe Republicans in Michigan and all across the nation can work with the president toward those objectives."

*George Weeks retired in 2006 after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.*

### Sled Ride To Be Sat. at Naubinway

A group of vintage snowmobile enthusiasts in the Naubinway area are hosting a snowmobile ride

Saturday, March 7, at 11 a.m. from the Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum in Naubinway to a nearby lodge on private property (approximately 15 miles). Once there, participants will have chili and snacks and ride the two-track trails, report Charlie and Marilyn Vallier. No

trail permit is needed for private property.

The ride is open to all. The only fee to participate will be a donation to the museum.

The ride is expected to end around 4 p.m.

Those who would like to attend are asked to call Mr. and Mrs. Vallier at 477-6192, or call the museum at 477-6298.

### Update Planned Monday on Dredging

The Les Cheneaux Islands Waterways Restoration group and Clark Township Board of Trustees will meet with representatives from the offices of Senators Carl Levin, Debbie Stabenow, and Congressman Bart Stupak, as well as from the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers Monday, March 9, to discuss the progress of federal funding for harbor dredging and maintenance projects in the Les Cheneaux area.

The meeting will be held at 2:30 p.m. at the Great Lakes Wooden Boat Building School in Cedarville.

### Northern Michigan News Roundup

*The news in brief from communities around the U.P. and northern Michigan*

Compiled using information published in various community newspapers.

#### To Get Rid of Eyesore, City Buys Long-vacant Downtown Cheboygan Store

A vacant store building long regarded as an eyesore in downtown Cheboygan will be purchased by the Cheboygan Downtown Development Authority (DDA) at a cost of \$129,700, the Cheboygan City Council decided Tuesday, February 24. The city will offer the property for redevelopment, or else the council can vote to demolish it.

Before it can be used, the former F.W. Woolworth Building basement will have to be pumped out of thousands of gallons of water that have leaked into the structure over the years since it has closed.

The building on North Main Street is owned by Jerome Yono. The cost will involve a purchase price of \$110,000, along with payment of current and delinquent taxes of approximately \$18,000, as well as the payment of legal fees and closing costs, plus an estimated transfer tax by the DDA.

Completing the sale could begin a long-awaited process to remove a structure considered to be a safety hazard.

— *Cheboygan Daily Tribune*

#### Scientists Discover Lake Huron Sinkhole Organisms

Organisms found at the bottom of two Lake Huron sinkholes in the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary are similar to organisms found on the bottom of permanently frozen Antarctica lakes, scientists have discovered.

Last summer, a group consisting of oceanography researchers traveled to Alpena to begin gathering information as part of a research project funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Ocean Exploration.

The group has been studying three sinkholes, one at El Cajon Bay, one near Middle Island, and one approximately 10 miles east of Middle Island. In September 2008, the team installed instruments to monitor lake conditions in the sinkholes. The instruments will be removed in May.

It has been found that the groundwater flowing into the bottom of the sinkholes contains dissolved sulphates, carbonates, and chloride, providing a stable environment for certain organisms to produce on the lake floor.

The high sulfur and low oxygen conditions are ideal for a purple cyanobacteria that has managed to thrive in an environment too extreme for other organisms. It has a different method of producing organic matter. Most plants use water in the photosynthetic process to produce organic matter. The cyanobacteria use hydrogen sulfide instead, and this is thought to be the origin of the photosynthetic process.

Research has found there is high species diversity at the sinkholes, which are different than the rest of Lake Huron.

Researching these organisms can be useful for pharmaceutical or biotechnological applications, the scientists reported.

An article about the team's discoveries was published February 24 in *Eos*, a publication of the American Geophysical Union.

— *The Alpena News*

### St. Ignace News Policies

#### Letters:

All responsible letters will be considered for publication and may be edited. They must be signed and a telephone number must be included for verification. Personal thank-you notes, personal attacks against other people, form letters, and letters promoting political candidates are not accepted, although letters for or against ballot proposals are welcome.

#### Obituaries:

The St. Ignace News maintains a policy of not charging for obituaries and we do often add information or rewrite them for clarity and reader interest. Obituaries that the family wants published exactly as submitted can be placed in the newspaper for \$75. Photographs are welcome at no charge.

#### Weddings:

Weddings with photographs are published without charge within 45 days of the ceremony. After 45 days, a photograph can be included for \$35.00.

#### Internet:

The complete edition of The St. Ignace News is available online at [stignacenews.com](http://stignacenews.com).

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## DeTour Winterfest Is Saturday

**Winterfest:** From page 1

events require registration by calling (906) 297-5024 or (906) 297-3231.

A children's sled-decorating activity will take place at 10:30 a.m. Participants can decorate sleds beforehand.

The theme for this year's snow sculpting is "architecture." Participants may duplicate a favorite building, in snow. Cash prizes will be awarded for best individual entries and a traveling plaque will be given for best business entry.

## Village Will Not Buy Properties

**Blight:** From page 1

from further deterioration," Mr. Wallin later told *The St. Ignace News*.

The committee, said Mr. Alford, first agreed to set expenditure priorities, which include roads, building a new fire station, and finishing work at city hall, and also agreed not to recommend purchasing the properties at this time.

"We also concluded as a sub-committee," said Mr. Alford, "we are not in the real estate business. We are not comfortable with spending between \$150,000 and \$200,000 on the speculation of return, especially when we have no specific purpose for purchasing this property at this time."

Mr. Wallin disagreed and said the

Judging is at 9:30 a.m.

A snowshoe sprint for both children and adults begins at 1 p.m. Snowshoes are available.

A snowmobile poker hike will start at the Village Hall and continue around DeTour. Registration is from 10 a.m. to noon, and all poker run cards must be turned in before 5 p.m. at DeTour Shell.

Tickets for the raffle drawings, including a 50/50 and general raffle, will be sold at the Village Hall. Drawings will be announced between 2:30 p.m. and 3 p.m.

city is in the real estate business and also should be in the blight removal business.

"Our concern should be to remove blight," he said. "If that costs money, so be it."

Chris Brown, a local builder who attended the meeting, suggested that since both properties are for sale, the village could offer a tax abatement to someone who would purchase and refurbish the property.

Mr. Wallin said he is against abatements.

Council voted to support the committee's recommendation not to purchase the two properties. Mr. Wallin voted against the recommendation.

Council next meets Thursday, March 5, at 7 p.m. in the Mackinaw City Village Hall.

## The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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The quotation under the flag of *The St. Ignace News* on Page 1 is from the 10 triads written by Dr. Fred Newton Scott, creator and teacher of the first continuous course in journalism in the United States at the University of Michigan in 1890. The 10 triads are chiseled on the parapet of the Detroit News Building at 615 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit. They were headed "Ideals of the Press" or "The Newspaper in a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.