

Gros Cap School Seeks Grant for More Classroom Sound Amplifiers

Sinking Fund Millage Renewal To Be on May 5 Election Ballot

By Ryan Schlehuder

Gros Cap School has purchased an amplifier for one of its classrooms to aid students with loss of hearing and attention deficit disorder, and will now seek additional funding to purchase six more systems for the rest of the kindergarten-through-eighth-grade school's classrooms.

The Moran Township school board, at its meeting Monday, March 16, voted to apply for \$5,000 for the project from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians 2% compact payments. That amount would allow the school to purchase five more amplifiers. The wireless system consists of a microphone and speakers.

The school received \$1,044 from St. Ignace Lions Club Thursday, March 12, to purchase its first system, which was installed in one of the classrooms Wednesday,

March 18.

Student teacher Mark Massey, assisted by School Superintendent Bill Peltier, is writing the grant.

"It's state-of-the-art technology that can project the voice of the teacher or, say, a student using it for a class presentation," said Mr. Massey. "There are always distractions in the classroom and this is one way to get around those distractions. We always want to be on the cusp of new technology and whatever resources we can get to benefit the students."

Mr. Massey added that the amplifying system is becoming popular within schools nationally.

The deadline to register to vote

for the May 5 general election is Monday, April 6. On the ballot is a request to renew Gros Cap School's sinking fund for another two years.

The fund receives 1.75 mills which, if passed, would generate approximately \$150,000 each year. The money is reserved for construction improvements and repairs to school buildings and landscaping. Plans are underway to repair the gymnasium and cafeteria roof, replace windows for better insulation, and also repair lighting in the gymnasium and cafeteria, said Mr. Peltier.

Third and fourth grade teacher Amy Lester and kindergarten and reading recovery teacher Mary

Cullen qualified for tenure, having completed a four-year probationary period.

Mr. Peltier announced that min-

utes from school board meetings are now available to the public on the Gros Cap School Web site, morantwp.eup.k12.mi.us.

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



State Wetlands Thrown into Federal Swamp?

This far in advance of the 2010 gubernatorial election, it's way too early to attach great significance to polls or the ever-expanding cast of those flirting with running. In the end, most won't.

As of this writing, the media are mentioning about 20 prospects, about equally divided by party. But some are serious enough to have exploratory committees, including Lieutenant Governor John Cherry, Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, and Attorney General Mike Cox.

Cherry is running and clearly the early frontrunner for the Democratic nomination. Cox and Land, who are term-limited, as is Governor Jennifer Granholm, have highest visibility among Republicans, along with Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson.

Although in no way a forecast of what is to come, there are some things worthy of note in a poll released March 13 by newsletter *Inside Michigan Politics* (IMP), which commissioned a poll of 600 registered voters conducted by Lansing-based Marketing Resource Group:

- Among Republicans, Patterson with 22% was the top choice for the nomination, followed by U.S. Representative Pete Hoekstra of Holland with 17%. Surprisingly, Cox trailed with 15%, and Land with 12%.

What it indicates is that in a crowded primary, Patterson, with a solid base in Metro Detroit, and Hoekstra, with one in the GOP stronghold of West Michigan, could be highly competitive.

- Among Democrats, Cherry is the overwhelming favorite among those who have an early choice. But 57% don't.

- Especially worthy of note: All three of the top GOP names outpolled Cherry/Cox by seven points, Land by five, and Patterson by four. Is Granholm an albatross for Cherry?

Marketing Resource Group President Tom Shields told *The Detroit News*: "Republicans haven't won many statewide races in the past decade, but Lieutenant Governor Cherry may have a tough time shaking the negative effects of serving as lieutenant governor during eight tough economic years. While we are still 19 months from the 2010 elections, the race for governor is shaping up as a real battle."

Snyder a Sleeper?

"Rick who?" was my reaction to an announcement last week that Ann Arbor venture capitalist Rick Snyder, a Republican who has helped others but has not run for office, is forming an exploratory committee about running for governor.

Here's who: He's a former president of the Gateway computer company that during his 1990s tenure with various responsibilities went from a \$600 million company to one with revenues in excess of \$6 billion; first chairman of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation; 2000 co-founder and CEO of Ardesta, one of the nation's largest investment firms focused on micro and nanotechnology companies, and currently founding chairman of the economic development organization for the Ann Arbor region.

In the *Ann Arbor News*, Snyder voiced what likely would be a campaign theme: "It's time for an alternative to traditional politicians. They haven't produced great results."

In his announcement, Snyder, 50-year-old father of three, said that if he runs, he would "do so in such a way that we end the politics-as-usual approach Michigan has grown so tired of."

He said he was "putting together the best team of advisers this state and country has to offer." His senior national consultant is John Weaver, longtime (1998-2007) adviser to presidential contender John McCain.

His lead state consultant is John Yob, a Grand Rapids political strategist who has had similar roles in the two successful campaigns of Secretary of State Land and was deputy national political director of McCain's 2008 campaign.

Yob calls Snyder a "dream candidate," a southeast Michigan businessman who knows how to create jobs and has resources for a well-funded campaign.

I would not put Snyder in the just-flirting category.

Congressional Clout

Michigan has economic grief on the home front but it still has the fourth most powerful congressional delegation despite a big loss on Capitol Hill and the defeat of a veteran lawmaker. The three northern congressmen have key roles.

"Michigan's delegation remains one of the most senior and powerful in the country," the Hill newspaper *Roll Call* noted last week in releasing its biennial ranking that placed Michigan behind California, New York, and Texas.

That's despite the ouster of 28-term Representative John Dingell (D-Dearborn) as chairman of the all-powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee. As the longest serving member in House history, he still has great weight to throw for Michigan.

Representative Joe Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield), who gained House influence in his 16 years there, was defeated last year.

Roll Call noted the seniority of others, including 10-term Dave Camp of Midland, ranking Republican on the Ways and Means Committee; nine-term Pete Hoekstra of Holland, Ranking Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, and nine-term Democrat Bart Stupak of Menominee, chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee's subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation.

Stupak is a high-visibility whistle-blower on many hot issues of the day, including food and drug safety.

Senator Carl Levin, Michigan's longest-serving senator, chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee and also is prominent on oversight issues, including gas prices.

Welcome (sort of) to Wisconsin

Wisconsin is Michigan's main competitor for Midwest tourism dollars, and that state's spending on tourism promotion has dwarfed ours in recent years. So it is surprising that Wisconsin plans to stop staffing its eight Welcome Centers, including one at the Michigan border on US-51 near Ironwood.

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism says it needs to cut \$1.7 million from its budget over the next two years, and people are increasingly getting travel information from the state's travel Web site and other Internet outlets.

The Ironwood Daily Globe, with readers on both sides of the border, noted in a March 5 editorial that Wisconsin's tourism industry contributes \$13 billion to the state economy, and is the lifeblood of many northern Wisconsin communities.

Let's hope our Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), which operates Welcome Centers and rest areas visited by 42 million people annually, would never consider something so shortsighted.

Steve Yencich, President and CEO of the Michigan Lodging and Tourism Association, said he's confident that MDOT "understands the importance of our Welcome Centers," but if such a proposal surfaced here, "the whole travel industry would be united and strong in opposition."

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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Community Needs Better Solutions for Youth in Custody

To the Editor:

In my research about juvenile crime, I found this report that finds that too many juveniles are confined in Michigan. They feel that the time is right to reform the system with less-expensive, more-effective options.

Michigan locks up delinquent youths at a higher rate than most states even as evidence shows there are better, more cost-effective ways to deal with troubled teens.

This past summer, a panel of juvenile justice experts spoke at a Capitol press conference about the release of the 2008 Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Michigan was 33rd (with No. 1 Being the best) among the states when it comes to the rate of keeping youths in custody, according to the report. There are 137 youths in custody for every 100,000 Michigan youths ages 10 to 15. That compares with a national rate of 125 per 100,000.

One expert, Bob Sheehan, executive director of Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eton, and Ingham counties said, "We know that locking kids up or sending them out of their families, out of their communities, to residential or correctional facilities – as our first response to trouble in a kid's life – does not work." He went on to say that children in trouble need services, and so do their families. The services must be coordinated – and funded appropriately.

In Mackinac County and Luce County, we are sending children as young as 12 years old to correction facilities three to four hours away from their homes. These children do not have very much contact with parents, creating several problems for them and their families. I would like to see our mental health community, schools, and the courts come together to find better local solutions to the problem of juvenile youth in custody.

Thomas Winchester
Engadine

Clarification Needed About Bike Path Plan

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to the article in the March 19 edition of *The St. Ignace News* entitled "City Seeks Public Opinion on State Street Plan for Bikes." The article was well written by Karen Gould, but I would just like to clarify one area of confusion. The article stated, "St. Ignace Township supported the project at its March 12 meeting, adopting a resolution to request MDOT explore the lane reduction with the three-year study." Actually, the St. Ignace Township board passed the same resolution that was presented to the St. Ignace City Council, asking MDOT to explore a lane reduction, and there was nothing in the resolution about doing so with a three-year study. The whole reason behind the resolution was to give MDOT the go ahead to start gathering public input, period.

Deb Evashevski,
St. Ignace
Co-chair, North Huron Scenic Pathway

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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.

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.

Windmills Put on Hold at Sault

The City of Sault Ste. Marie has put a one-year moratorium on placing or installing windmills, giving the city time to develop regulations about them, it was reported Thursday, March 19. Noise, safety, and the impact on the landscape were cited as concerns by the Planning and Development Commission in proposing a moratorium.

The commission unanimously agreed to halt any windmill projects for six months while an ordinance is drafted.

— *The Evening News*

Newberry School District Makes More Cuts

The Tahquamenon Area School District at Newberry will lay off seven employees before next fall's school start. Four teachers and three paraprofessionals have been notified of their layoff status. The school district anticipates a \$500,000 funding deficit next year.

The district has already made cuts owing to funding deficits. In the past three years, the district has eliminated the Curtis school, one principal, two bus runs, nine teachers through attrition, 1.5 custodians, a half-time nurse, three food service workers, and five paraprofessionals, and has restrict professional development. It has sold its payroll and special education coordinator services to other districts and eliminated portions of the fine arts program.

— *The Newberry News*

Enrollment Up at U.P. Community College

Bay College in Escanaba is reporting a surge in enrollment, a phenomenon experienced by many other community colleges across the country during the recession. The college is seeing a 5% increase in student enrollment for spring and summer, it reported Wednesday, March 18.

The number of students at all campuses and online enrolled in the spring or summer semester is 530; last year it was 504.

Increases are seen in adult and guest students, those from four-year universities taking summer classes. The college has a loyal following from Gladstone and Escanaba, with 47% of the seniors at Escanaba High School attending after graduation.

The enrollment report is not final until registration deadlines have passed.

— *The Daily Press*

Land Use Trends Tracked as Part of County's Development Plan

Marquette County planners have updated land development information for the county's comprehensive plan and posted the findings online. Public comment is being taken.

The report shows current data and trends in use and focuses on how to sustain development in the long term, a concept called smart growth.

The county is trying to shift away from "auto-dependent sprawl" along the highway and incorporate "smart growth" ideas such as mixed-use areas and walkability.

"Infill" development, meaning redeveloping unused properties in already developed areas, is one of the key methods of avoiding sprawl, planners there say.

Although there are some indicators of a wider economic slump, county officials reported the area has not experienced as severe an economic downturn as the rest of the country. Increasing affordable and balanced housing options should be a community goal, they report.

— *The Mining Journal*

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.

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