

Weather Tower at Cut River To Aid Motorists, MDOT

By Karen Gould

A weather tower and a tower with five solar panels will provide realtime weather conditions on US-2 in the Cut River Bridge area beginning this fall. The weather tower, called an Environmental Sensor Station, standing at the east entrance to the bridge, is designed to aid motorists and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and is expected to be particularly helpful in the winter.

The Cut River tower cost approximately \$15,000. Across the Upper Peninsula this year, a more than \$1 million MDOT project called the Road Weather Information System will include eight new stations and the addition of equipment to four existing stations, said Traffic and Safety Engineer Dawn Gustafson from the Superior Region office in Escanaba. Ms. Gustafson also is the Intelligent Transportation Systems coordinator for the Upper Peninsula.

The Cut River tower will be the sixth Environmental Sensor Station in the Upper Peninsula. Eight more are planned across the region this summer, bringing the U.P. total to 14.

Two other towers already are operational on US-2 in Mackinac County. One tower is west of M-117 near Greenwald Road and a second tower is east of Wildwood Road.

"The goal of the project is to build a network of environmental sensor stations to refine our weather forecasting," said Ms. Gustafson.

Pavement temperature, wind speed, and precipitation will be recorded at the tower through sensors in the roadway and on the tower. The collected data will be used by the Michigan Department of Transportation to respond to conditions as they occur, such as dispatching salt trucks or snowplows to snow-covered and icy sections along the US-2 corridor. The weather reports also will help in scheduling crews more accurately and aid in the

Two Sites Lost in County as MDOT Cuts 137 Road and Bridge Projects

One road and one bridge project will be lost in Mackinac County as the Michigan Department of Transportation has removed 137 road and bridge projects from its five-year statewide plan. The resurfacing of Borgstrom Road to Hiawatha Trail was dropped, as well as the bridge culvert replacement of I-75 over Hoban Creek.

The agency removed projects totaling \$600 million, said Ronald DeCook, director of governmental affairs. The cuts are a result of the



Two towers at the east entrance to the Cut River Bridge along US-2 will report real time weather conditions and bridge data beginning this fall. The first pole, an aluminum fold-down tower, is 30 feet tall. The second, much larger pole supports five solar panels used to operate the system. Radio communications is at the top. The small building contains computer equipment. Vehicles now block the entrance to the bridge, Thursday, June 11, as crews work on renovating the span.

use of materials like salt and sand more efficiently.

"US-2 along the lake [Michigan] is always a treacherous stretch of highway in the wintertime," said delivery engineer Pete Paramski, who works from the state's Transportation Service Center in Newberry. The road often is closed owing to whiteout conditions, generally in the sand dunes area west of St. Ignace, and traffic is detoured onto Worth Road.

The changeable weather signs, one near Worth Road and a second near M-117, will continue in operation and will advise motorists if the road is closed, as they have in the past. Under consideration by the department are plans to replace the message boards announcing road closures with new, permanent

boards this fall.

The state's inability to match federal funding, and Mr. DeCook expects more cuts to be on the way.

More than 13,000 construction jobs will be lost statewide if funding is not improved, Mr. DeCook said. The Michigan Transportation Task Force has developed several proposals to obtain more money, including an increased tax on gas and diesel and an increase on vehicle registration fees, with funding to go to roads. The funding proposals will next be considered by state lawmakers.

boards this fall.

The network of stations will be used by the department for highway maintenance coordination, although information should be accessible to the public online within two years.

The first weather station was constructed in 2007 near the Escanaba River Bridge.

panels used to operate the tower and its computers, which are housed in a nearby building.

Initially, the network of stations will be used by the department for highway maintenance coordination, although information should be accessible to the public online within two years.

The first weather station was constructed in 2007 near the Escanaba River Bridge.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Public Urged To Attend LC School Budget Hearing

To the Editor:

I am writing to urge everyone who has an interest in the Les Cheneaux school district to attend the budget hearing scheduled for Monday, June 22, at 7 p.m. at the school. At the hearing, the public will have the opportunity to study the proposed budget in detail, ask questions, and offer suggestions.

Since joining the school board in January, I have learned that the problems facing our schools are complicated, and that there are no easy answers. I hope that those who care about our school will take the time to educate themselves about the challenges we are facing, and work with the school board toward decisions that are good for our school and our children. I am writing this letter as an individual, and not as a representative of the school board.

Lisa Dunn
Cedarville

Cedar Post Is a Community Effort

To the Editor:

Yesterday at Cedar Post Thrift Shop was one more confirmation that Cedar Post is a community effort, not just the volunteers who man the store six days a week. The volunteers who work there are just a small reason why Cedar Post prospers. Without the surrounding communities and their contributions, we would not be able to reach the number of people we do.

Two people, Ed and Augusta Beardsley, came in Friday and asked if they could wash our windows at no charge. They said they live in Newberry in the winter and St. Ignace in the summer. They appreciate what we do and wanted to show their gratitude.

The point of this letter is to reaffirm to those who donate their household treasures, food for our Food Pantry, checks from churches and individuals, school children, Scouts, and postal workers who collect food what an important part they play. They are Cedar Post.

And now we can add people who volunteer to wash our windows.

Marjarie Brown
Cedarville

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.

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Michigan Politics

By
George Weeks



National Spotlight on Stupak and U.P.

U.S. Representative Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) gave the presidents of General Motors and Chrysler a well-deserved earful on what their abrupt dumping of nearly 2,000 dealerships is doing to rural America.

Stupak, whose sprawling 31-county 1st Congressional District is about as rural as districts get, presided in shirt-sleeves at a packed, five-hour hearing Friday of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on how the two firms are restructuring under the federal bailout deal.

"I'm a vast rural area," said Stupak in asking how the companies can possibly service their vehicles with so many miles between the dealers that are left. "You don't get any more rural than me. I don't have any metro areas."

"I'm very familiar with your district," Chrysler President James Press said of the district that is the second largest east of the Mississippi. "I go there weekends."

GM President Fritz Henderson (whose earlier declaration that "The GM that many of you knew is history" is on point for both struggling companies) told Stupak's subcommittee that the dealer closing plan seeks to leave owners of GM cars with nearby access to dealers.

Stupak, who has an Oldsmobile with nearly 200,000 miles on it that he is now "nursing along," questioned how good servicing access could be possible with the closings in such places as Marquette, Escanaba, and Cheboygan.

All members of the subcommittee and the dealers who appeared at the hearing had similar tales of woe from Oregon, Texas, and elsewhere. The auto execs squirmed but, of course, they're dealing with a bailout hand dealt by the Obama administration and Congress.

At the outset of the hearing, Stupak said:

"For much of the past 100 years, General Motors has been the largest automobile company in the world. The Detroit three -- GM, Ford, and Chrysler -- have fueled the engine of Michigan's economy as well as the economy of the United States for generations. Through their vehicle manufacturing, countless suppliers, and a vast dealer network, the automobile industry has created and supported millions of jobs.

"With the recent global financial collapse, much of the domestic auto industry has been brought to its knees. In 2008 GM and Chrysler lost \$30.9 billion and \$17 billion, respectively, and in order to survive, they both recently filed for bankruptcy. In the bankruptcy process, GM has announced plans to close roughly 1,200 dealerships and Chrysler announced plans to close 789 dealerships nationwide.

"The federal government has loaned billions of dollars to GM and Chrysler in an effort to help stabilize them. Billions more have been committed to assist them

while emerging from bankruptcy."

Seldom, since his election in 1992, has Stupak had such a high-visibility week on Capitol Hill, given the national attention given to his subcommittee hearing and the "Cash for Clunkers" bill on which he played an instrumental role in negotiating an agreement on a bill sponsored by Senator Debbie Stabenow.

The House passed legislation to create a program that will provide cash vouchers up to \$4,500 at auto dealerships for consumers to trade aging, less fuel efficient automobiles for modern, fuel efficient models.

"The Cash for Clunkers program accomplishes a dual task of reducing emissions and stimulating sales in the auto industry," Stupak said. "Cash for Clunkers provides an incentive for Americans to do their part to reduce emissions without imposing new regulations on the industry or consumers. This is a win-win that results in cleaner cars on the road and an increase in sales for the struggling auto industry."

Also last week, Stupak urged Governor Jennifer Granholm to reconsider her plan for closing Northern Michigan's prisons and prison camps slated for closure as part of an effort to address Michigan's record budget shortfall. Stupak noted that six of the eight facilities slated for closure are located in his district.

"I respect the difficult decisions the Governor and members of the state legislature must make in addressing the budget crisis," Stupak said. "But as our nation and state work toward economic recovery, now is not the time to abandon the communities and workers that have supported our state's prison system for decades."

Stupak's prison pitch to Granholm is not likely to prevail. Nor as of this writing has there been a response to Stupak's pitch to President Barack Obama that some Guantanamo detainees be sent to a vacant Upper Peninsula prison in Manistique.

Obama: Yooper is "cool"

Among those asking President Obama questions at his Wisconsin town hall meeting in Green Bay last week was Matt Stein, who teaches social studies at North Central Area Schools in Menominee County.

Before getting to the substance of education issues, there was this initial exchange, as cited by the official White House transcript, which used "UPers" rather than the customary "Yoopers":

THE PRESIDENT: Is that what you call yourselves, UPers?

Q: Yes. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, that's cool. (Applause.) All right.

Q: Proudly, we call ourselves UPers. (Laughter.)

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.

Economy Impacting Shelter Tenants

By Michael Ayala

Residents of the Diane Pepler Center shelters in the Eastern Upper Peninsula are being impacted by the state of the economy, sometimes resulting in longer stays, said executive director of the center Doreen Howson. The shelters, operated as "safe houses" in several local communities, provide housing for victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault, among other services provided by the agency.

Spending fewer hours at work, the inability to locate a job, or job layoffs have added to the challenge for some people to exit the shelters and find affordable living during the recession. Mrs. Howson said. The shelter has not seen an influx of residents owing to the recession, however.

The center works with each family or individual to create a set of goals that they work toward, and then allows them to stay at the shelter as long as it takes to reach those goals. Nearly 450 families receive help from the center each year, and Mrs. Howson reported there has been little change in that number year to year.

No fee is required to stay at the shelters or to receive help from the center. The center receives state, local, and federal funding to provide services.

The center is working alongside Michigan Works! to aid residents seeking employment. Housing groups such as Safe Haven are also working with residents to provide them with housing vouchers.

Housing is not the only service that the Diane Pepler Center provides, Mrs. Howson says. Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or those who require parenting help can contact the center to receive aid.

The center, headquartered in Sault Ste. Marie, provides counseling, legal, and court services. The center can also help individuals obtain legal protection orders when necessary.

Appointments can be made to obtain these services, or the crisis hotline can be contacted toll free at (800) 882-1515 if immediate help is needed. Walk-ins are also welcome.

The Diane Pepler Center St. Ignace branch can also be contacted at 643-0498.

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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.