

# School Budgets Threatened

**Editorial: From page 3**  
 ting the Foundation Grant by \$100. So, for 2010-11 school year, when the Federal Stimulus Funds are depleted, the state is going to have to make up the loss of Federal Stimulus Funds by more than \$1,000 per student just to get the Foundation Grant back to the 2007-08 level.  
 Additionally, the legislature is being forced to eliminate other school revenues. The declining enrollment funding factor, which allowed some schools to average their enrollment over three years, is being eliminated. Transportation reimbursement funds received by some local districts will be eliminated, in addition to the funding for geographically isolated schools. This only affects DeTour, Mackinac Island, and Whitefish Township Schools in Paradise, locally.

How does all this translate for your local school? Following are a couple of examples:

Les Cheneaux Community Schools Projected General Fund Revenue:			
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Enrollment:	333	292 (Est.)	
Foundation Grant (FG):	\$7713	-\$100	\$7,613 (Est.)
Enrollment X FG=	\$2,568,400		
Declining Enrollment Factor	\$ 84,800		00
Total General Fund:	\$2,653,200		\$2,223,000 (Est.)

St. Ignace Area Schools Projected General Fund Revenue:			
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Enrollment:	700	661 (Est.)	
Foundation Grant (FG):	\$7316	-\$100	\$7,216 (Est.)
Enrollment X FG=	\$5,121,200	\$4,769,776	
Declining Enrollment Factor	\$ 102,400		00
Transportation:	\$ 23,500	00	
Total General Fund:	\$5,247,100		\$4,770,000 (Est.)

As seen, each district is showing significant revenue decreases for the next school year. While we can't know what will be proposed for the 2010-11 school year, we do know that massive cuts from the state will have to be imposed as the Federal Stimulus Funds are used up.

So the question becomes, "Given the current economic crisis, what are the chances that the state will be able to fund the Foundation Grant for 2010-2011 even at the 2007-08 levels?"

While I am not suggesting that consolidation is the answer, I do believe that our only hope of maintaining a local school is to share students, which could be done in a number of ways. Most importantly, I believe that we have lost our privilege of being provincial in our thinking about local schools, that we must think that all of the students in the area are "our students," and that now is the time to open the discussion on how we can maintain the best possible education for all of "our children." The longer we wait, the less opportunity we will have to shape and direct the best possible plan.

Schools have been asking students to "Put their thinking caps on" for generations. The task to all is to stretch that thinking cap to its maximum size and creative limits as everyone works together to anticipate and meet the forthcoming challenges without sacrificing all that is positive about local education in the Eastern Upper Peninsula.

## County Road Repair Plans Announced

**Hog Island: From page 9**  
**Road and Highway Improvement Plan Resolution Approved**

The Mackinac County Road Commission joined others in adopting a resolution requesting the governor and the Michigan legislature implement a plan to improve Michigan roads and highways. The resolution is in response to the dwindling funding road commissions across the state are receiving as a result of state budget cutbacks.

The original resolution was received from the Dickinson County Board of Road Commissioners. The Mackinac commission adopted the resolution as it was received.

**Township Road Improvements on the Horizon**

The road commission entered into a series of road improvement agreements with the Portage, St. Ignace, and Brevort township boards.

The commission will work on six roads in Brevort Township, including 1,000 feet of Nothelfer Road, Wartella Road, 1,000 feet of Ed Hansen Lane, Walker Road, East Brevort Lake Road from M-123 north and west 4.6 miles to M-123, and Brevort Lake Road. The work consists of gravel surfacing, grid underlayment, shoulder gravel, paving, pavement markings, and skip pavement patching. The projects will cost \$200,906. The road commission will pay \$10,000 for the East Brevort Lake Road and Walker Road work, as it is a match project with the township contributing. The commission will

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# Wiser Carries on 3 Generations of Native American Basket Making

**By Audrey Hutchison**

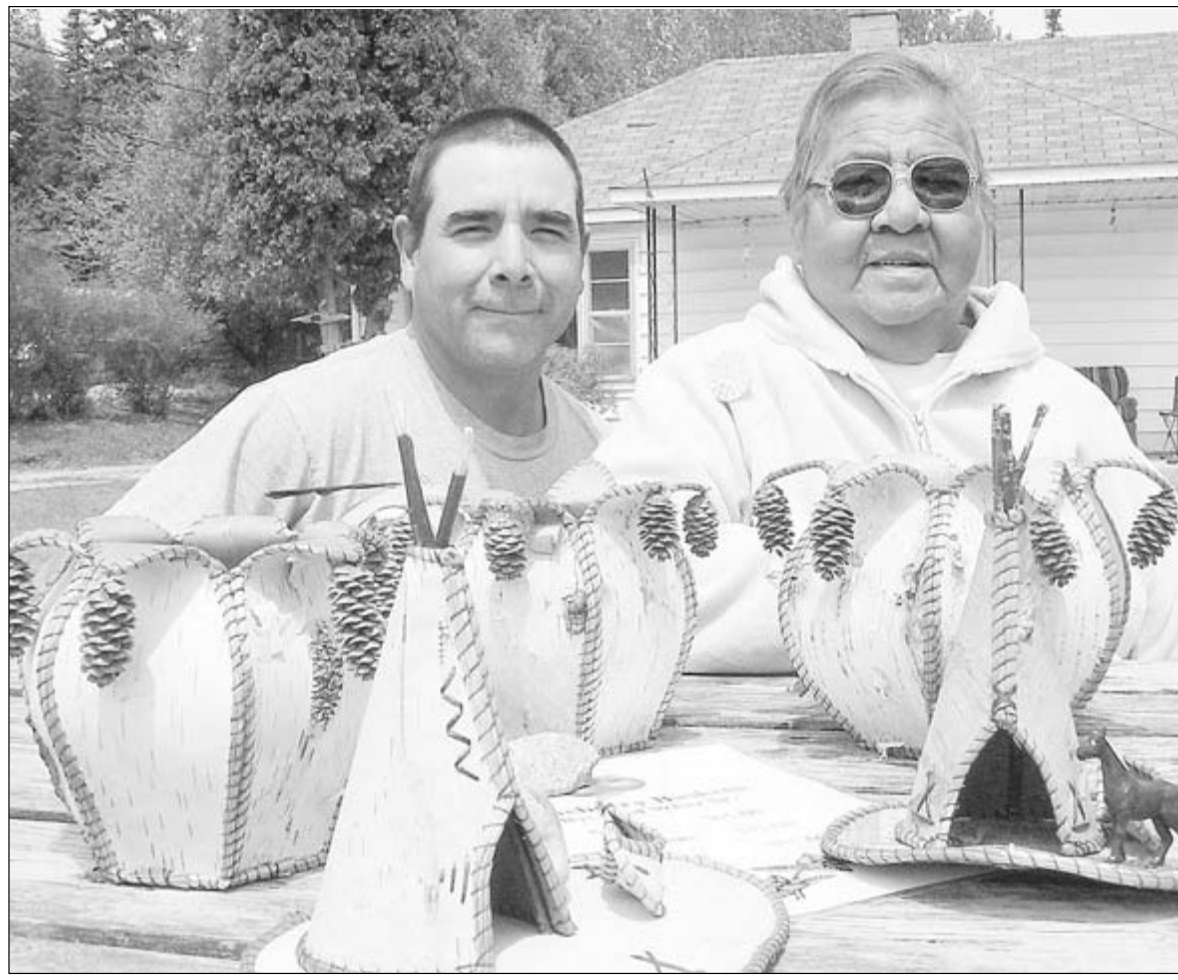
A young Native American man by the name of Fred Wiser, 34, of Cedarville, is carrying on the tradition of three generations. Fred makes blueberry baskets for resale.

His grandmother, Angeline Gabow, taught his mother, Lillian Wiser, now 80 years old, to make the baskets and other items such as porcupine quill boxes, made of birch bark, sweet grass, pine cones, and dyed porcupine quills. Mr. Wiser would help his mother and grandmother from the time that he was seven years old. Mrs. Gabow made baskets until she was 92 years old. She passed away when she was 93.

Then his became the family's full time basket maker, and she is proud to tell that one of her baskets is on display at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Wiser started making the baskets full time approximately 12 years ago. They are named "blueberry" because of the design and shape, which is similar to the blueberry itself. These baskets are made with birch bark, sweet grass, button carpet thread, and pine cones.

The birch bark is traditionally collected around the last week of June, when the bark peels and



**Fred Wiser and his mother, Lillian, with a couple of the baskets and village scenes that he makes and sells at the roadside, and also at area powwows. Mr. Wiser is the third generation of his family to make the baskets.**

curls. It then is flattened and bundled, weighted down, and stored for future use. The sweet grass is

harvested about that time of year, also, and dried by hanging it upside down, tied at the roots. It's hung to dry in the shed until needed.

It takes eight hours to sew the pieces of one basket together, Mr. Wiser said.

He has eight brothers and one sister, and only two of the siblings sew the baskets, the oldest, Russell, and himself.

Mr. Wiser also makes tepees and other miniature village scenes. They are good sellers, he said, and are popular with the younger people who come to see his wares.

He lives across the road from the Cedarville schools, but spends much of his time at the home of his mother in Raco, making the baskets with his mother and brother.

## Sheriff's Office Ceiling Repair, Deputy Benefits Are Addressed

**By Michael Ayala**

The Mackinac County Board of Commissioners will hire Jim Musick of St. Ignace to replace ceiling tiles with drywall at the Sheriff's Department for \$4,757. Mr. Musick's bid, which was accepted at the commission's meeting Thursday, June 25, was the lowest of five bids received, which ranged to \$20,000. The second lowest was \$6,535.

His contract will be contingent on proof of liability insurance, worker compensation documentation, and references. Work is expected to begin after July 4, and finish by the end of the month.

The project will include replacing the ceiling tiles with drywall in five rooms of the sheriff office administrative area. Services in the building will not be interrupted during the repairs, Mackinac County Sheriff Scott Strait told commissioners.

In another Sheriff's Department matter, commissioners will work with Bois Blanc Township to determine who is responsible for unem-

ployment benefits for Sheriff Deputy Graham Whipple, who provides police coverage for the island 10 months out of the year.

Mr. Whipple has been the deputy on the island for 14 years, but has not drawn unemployment until last year. Sheriff Strait told commissioners that there is confusion as to who should pay the benefits and asked that Mr. Whipple's contract be reviewed to determine whether the

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also pay \$18,091 in engineering costs.

Gager Road in Portage Township will be improved through a sand fill, aggregate surfacing, and clearing and restoration work. The work is also a match project, and will cost Portage Township \$88,006 after the road commission covers \$6,450.

Charles Moran Road in St. Ignace Township will have its existing seal coat pulverized and reshaped for about 1,050 feet. It will cost St. Ignace Township \$3,500.

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