

# The St. Ignace News

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and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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## Preschool Programs Cut Shaky Funding Limits Options

By Michael Ayala

With politicians in Lansing proposing cuts in preschool education, many schools in the Mackinac County area have eliminated their preschool programs. Even if state funding comes through for preschool this fall, it will be too late to put the local programs into place, some school administrators say.

St. Ignace Area Schools Superintendent Mike Springsteen said his district has been forced to drop the program because of the funding uncertainty.

A preschool cooperative, however, is available at St. Ignace schools, although space is limited to 16, and 12 children already are enrolled.

The preschool is funded through fundraisers and tuition, teacher Donna Bassett said. Tuition for a four year-old child is \$110 a month, with classes on Monday through Thursday.

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## Celebrating EUP Farming Heritage Stalwart Fair This Weekend

By Jonathan Eppley

Farmers, animal owners, and tractor enthusiasts from all over northern Michigan will descend upon Stalwart this weekend for the "Biggest Little Fair" in the state -- the 104th annual Chippewa County Stalwart Agricultural Fair. The fair will attract horse, goat, poultry, rabbit, and sheep farmers, as well as crafters and crop farmers to the Stalwart Fairgrounds Thursday, September 10, through Saturday, September 12.

A celebration of the Eastern Upper Peninsula's agricultural heritage, it is a traditional farm fair and does not include carnival activities.

Organizer Penny Belinski said she expects up to 175 agricultural exhibits and animals to be entered into the fair, and more than 1,000 spectators to attend.

"Maybe a little more. Hopefully a little more," she said. She is concerned that high gas prices and the sluggish economy will deter people from coming, but remains optimistic that attendance will be up.

Farmers and animal owners will

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# Walk Draws 50,000 to Straits



With fog partially shrouding the towers behind them, walkers approach the south end of the Mackinac Bridge Monday morning, September 7. Walkers received certificates for crossing the finish line at the Mackinaw City side of the Mackinac Bridge. About 50,000 people made the crossing this year, Mackinac Bridge Authority estimates., and walking conditions were excellent.

## Enthusiasm High for Opportunity To Stroll Across Mackinac Bridge

By Mark Tower

The crowd roared the loudest around 6 a.m. Monday, September 7, when emcee Gary Engle asked which walkers waiting to cross the Mackinac Bridge for the annual Labor Day Bridge Walk were first-timers. Those first-time experiences were mixed Monday with something that has grown out of many others' first-time experiences walking the bridge, a tradition.

While some walkers, like Bill and Marilyn Chandler from Phoenix, Arizona, got their lifelong wish of walking the bridge when their schedules finally permitted it this year, others like Jim and Maggie Johnston from Fort Gratiot near Port Huron said they have walked the bridge 20 years in a row, making it an important family tradition for them.

Clint Weber and his son, Silas, made the long trip from Indianapolis, Indiana, for Monday's walk, a drive Silas said was worth it, although he didn't look forward to the return trip.

"My favorite part was looking at the mist," Silas said, referring to a heavy fog that shrouded part of the bridge for most of Monday morning.

Mr. Weber said the beautiful weather, scenic views, and opportunities for photographs he may never be able to get again were all encouragements for a great bridge walk.

"I am amazed at the number of people here," he said.

Sue Fuss arrived early in the morning with friends and family to take part in her 40th consecutive Mackinac Bridge walk. The first year she walked, Mrs. Fuss said her two sons walked with her and distributed literature for the Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce.

Many years later, she was still eager for the gates to open and to begin another journey across the five-mile suspension bridge.

"I enjoy the walk and the excitement of the crowd," she said.

Don and Barb Pastor from Flint said they have been walking it together for 17 years, and hope to

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# Ten Run for Seats in Mackinaw City Government

## Election Is Tuesday, September 15

By Michael Ayala

With the Mackinaw City Village Council elections set for Tuesday, September 15, 10 candidates will run for the three trustee seats, and clerk, treasurer, and president positions available. Incumbent president Ronald Wallin will face trustee Jeff Hingston for the position of village president. Two trustee incumbents, James Alford and Janelle Bancroft, will defend their seats, while Lana Jaggi will leave her trustee seat open to vie for the village clerk position against Elizabeth Clemens. Challengers Steven Celez, Scott

Newman, and planning commission member Rosada Mann seek election as village trustees. Village treasurer Patricia Peppler runs unopposed.

The polls will open at Mackinaw City Village Hall at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.

Following are interviews with the candidates for office.

### Village President Candidates

The president of the village is the leader of the council. As the leader, the president presides over council meetings and is the representative of the village. The president also

makes committee appointments.

### Ronald Wallin

Before being elected president in 2007, Ronald Wallin served as village president from 1978 to 1986. He wishes to be reelected to continue to oversee Mackinaw City's growth.

He would like to double tourism in Mackinaw City while maintaining its small-town charm. This can be achieved, he said, by bringing in more business during the non-peak seasons.

Improving zoning laws to prevent over-building is one action that can be taken to maintain the waterfront, he said. The laws would need

to be carefully examined and constructed to achieve that goal without creating unnecessary restrictions on potential business owners.

"I think we're charged with maintaining as much beauty as we can without infringing on anybody's right to conduct business," he said.

More effort needs to be made to advertise Mackinaw City as an attractive area for year-around businesses to be established, Mr. Wallin said. Without them, it is difficult to retain Mackinaw City's young residents. Without year-around jobs, they leave the village in search of stable work.

"If you're a young family, you

can't make it" on seasonal employment, he said.

During his presidency, Mr. Wallin has led an effort to make Mackinaw City more appealing to visitors and residents. He feels the appearance of the village has improved as a result of that campaign and the efforts of those involved.

He has lived in Mackinaw City for most of his life. He is a graduate of Mackinaw City High School. He enjoys the energy of its residents, he said. Many villagers are eager to volunteer for the benefit of others and Mackinaw City itself, he said.

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