

# St. Ignace City Manager Receives Satisfactory Evaluation From Council

By Mark Tower

St. Ignace City Manager Eric Dodson received an overall rating of satisfactory in his annual evaluation from Mayor Paul Grondin and all six council members during the Tuesday, September 8, city council meeting.

All council members and the mayor gave Mr. Dodson a satisfactory rating, and several gave additional comments and suggestions for improvement. A satisfactory rating is the highest among three options in the evaluation. The other two are "needs improvement" and "unsatisfactory."

Mr. Grondin said the manager's number one concern should be the financial status of the city.

"Obviously, that is a no brainer with the state in the finances it is in today, which affects every city in Michigan," he said. "To me, financial solvency of this city is very, very important. Otherwise, we can't provide the basic services we provide."

In addition to the overall ratings, council members made comments about Mr. Dodson's performance.

Mayor Pro-Tem Don Gustafson said Mr. Dodson could include more documentation when council members are being asked to make a deci-

sion on an issue and should focus on reducing city expenses.

"The final alternative of tax increase should only be considered as a last resort after other options are exhausted," Mr. Gustafson said, expressing his political view.

Council member Susan Tamlyn-Massaway said Mr. Dodson could improve in the grant-writing area.

"Grants are available for small communities and I think it is important to see those dollars," Mrs. Tamlyn-Massaway wrote in her evaluation. "In his interview, he was very readily talking about grants he had written for his prior position,

and seems to not be doing here."

Council member William LaLonde said he is satisfied with Mr. Dodson's performance and gave a few suggestions about areas that need improvement in the city.

"We do have some issues facing the city that we need to prioritize and hopefully find a way to get them done," Mr. LaLonde said, "city streets, City Hall [improvements], empty stores downtown."

Council members Merv Wyse, Tom Della-Moretta, and Paul Fullerton all gave Mr. Dodson a satisfactory rating for his performance in the past year, but offered no writ-

ten comments on possible areas of improvement.

The instrument for evaluation was changed this year by Mr. Grondin. Changes included eliminating individual ratings on each section of the evaluation and focusing on choosing one of the three overall options.

Mr. Gustafson said since some of the sections are more critical to the success of the city than others, the old evaluation forms did not allow evaluators to properly weigh each section, creating inaccurate results. Instead of only giving two evaluative options like last year, satisfac-

ry and unsatisfactory, the "needs improvement" option was also added this year.

Leading up to the evaluation process, Mr. Gustafson also encouraged council members to make comments on areas that need improvement, telling them, "He can't read our minds."

The evaluation included 10 categories on which to rate Mr. Dodson, including personal, professional skills, relations with elected members, policy execution, reporting, citizen relations, staffing, leadership/supervision, fiscal management, and community.

# Mackinaw City Council Refers Property Abandonment to Planning Commission

By Michael Ayala

Albert Smith's request for the village's abandonment of 9,012 square feet of right-of-way of Straits Avenue and DuJauncey Street will be examined by the Mackinaw City Planning Com-

mission, the Village Council decided during its 15-minute meeting Thursday, September 17.

Planning commissioners want to examine Mr. Smith's request in greater detail and determine what effect it will have on the village

master plan, Manager Jeff Lawson said, including potential changes to the roads, parcel access, and utilities.

Mr. Smith sought the village abandonment of the land September 3, a request that was met with caution by the council and ultimately tabled. In exchange, the Smith family would deed a 679-square-foot area on the southwest corner of Lakeside Drive and DuJauncey to the village.

Jeff Hingston, serving as trustee for the final time before taking over as village president, asked if referring the matter to the commission would create difficulties for Mr.

Smith and his mother, Peg. Mr. Smith replied he would prefer to have the decision expedited so he could begin construction of a single level house as quickly as possible. He agreed to have the matter reviewed by the commission, saying there is still enough time to build the house before winter. The request will be reviewed during its next meeting Thursday, September 24.

The reason for the request, Mr. Smith said, is his mother has difficulty balancing and her bones have become brittle. Her bedroom and bathroom are on the second floor of her house, making it difficult for her

to reach them. The abandonment of property by the village would give Mr. Smith space to build a one-story home for her. The new house would be constructed near the first one, while the original would be shuttered for the winter. The old house would be worked on in the future and would stay in the family, he said.

"It's not a larger home we're looking for, it's a single level," he told *The St. Ignace News*.

Mrs. Smith wishes to continue living in Mackinaw City. Renovation of her current home is not a solution, Mr. Smith said, as there would be nowhere for her to stay.

There are no family members living in Mackinaw City she could stay with during renovations. Living in an apartment would not be possible, he said, as the available apartments have stairs.

"At the end of the day, this is about maintaining her quality of life," Mr. Smith said.

## Matthews Property Update

Demolition has begun on the recently acquired Matthews property on West Central Avenue by the village. Darrow's Excavating is removing blighted cabins and will remove a house after the fire department has used it for smoke simulation training.

## Court Reports

The following dispositions are from 92nd District Court in St. Ignace September 8, September 9, September 15, and September 17, Judge Beth Gibson presiding. Arresting agencies are in parentheses. The court does not distinguish between jail time to be served immediately and jail sentences that are suspended.

- Patrick Kelpin, 21 (age at court date), of Harper Woods, pleaded guilty to minor in possession and was assessed a fine of \$150. (Mackinac Island Police)

- Dawn Stus, 68, of Gladstone, pleaded guilty to use of marijuana and was assessed a fine of \$1,000 or 90 days in jail. (Michigan State Police)

- Thomas Brown, 60, of Curtis, waived preliminary examination and was bound over to Circuit Court on one count operating while intoxicated (third offense). (Michigan State Police)

- Jason Laverty, 32, of Gould City, pleaded guilty to use of marijuana and was assessed a fine of \$1,000 or 90 days in jail. (Mackinac County Sheriff)

- Charles Campbell, Jr., 21, of St. Ignace, pleaded guilty to operating while visibly impaired and was assessed a fine of \$1,100 and three months probation. (Mackinac County Sheriff)

- Laura Sims, 36, of St. Ignace, pleaded guilty to operating while intoxicated (second offense) and was assessed a fine of \$423 and 150 days in jail. (Mackinac County Sheriff)

- Matthew Molag, 22, of Grand Rapids, pleaded guilty to use of marijuana and was assessed a fine of \$1,220 or 90 days in jail. (Mackinac Island Police)

- Seth Dickson, 46, of Grand Rapids, waived preliminary examination and was bound over to Circuit Court on one count operating while intoxicated (third offense). (Michigan State Police)

- Alex Jennings, 21, of Mackinac Island, pleaded guilty to use of marijuana and was assessed a fine of \$1,120 or 90 days in jail. (Mackinac Island Police)

- George Dunlop, 53, of Wilton, Illinois, pleaded guilty to use of marijuana and was assessed a fine of \$1,500. (Mackinac Island Police)

- Kenneth Mongene, 22, of Cedarville, waived preliminary examination and was bound over to Circuit Court on one count breaking and entering a building with intent. (Michigan State Police)

- Brandon Bowman, 24, of Ann Arbor, pleaded no contest to alcohol - selling/furnishing to minors and was assessed a fine of \$500. (St. Ignace City Police)

- David Johnson, 52, of Mackinac Island, pleaded guilty to disorderly person and was assessed a fine of \$158. (Mackinac Island Police)

- Travis Vantuinen, 29, of Wyoming, Michigan, pleaded guilty to disorderly person and was assessed a fine of \$158. (Mackinac Island Police)

- Michael Syrjala, 22, of St. Ignace, pleaded guilty to driving while license suspended and was assessed a fine of \$258. (Michigan State Police)

- Shane McDonald, 19, of St. Ignace, pleaded guilty to minor in possession (2nd) and disorderly person and was assessed a fine of \$633. (Michigan State Police)

## Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



### Athletes Turned Politicians

Sports can add bounce to springboards into politics.

University of Michigan football center Gerald R. Ford went on to Congress and the White House.

Jim Bunning, a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame who pitched a 1958 no-hitter for the Detroit Tigers, is Kentucky's junior senator.

Now comes Jay Riemersma of Zeeland, a former Academic All-Big Ten tight end at Michigan who went on to the Buffalo Bills and Pittsburgh Steelers and announced last week as a 2010 Republican candidate for the seat being vacated by 2nd District Representative Pete Hoekstra, R-Holland, who is running for governor.

It's Michigan's most Republican congressional district, stretching up the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan from Allegan County to Benzie County.

Mr. Riemersma, joined on the campaign trail last week by former U-M football coach Lloyd Carr, said: "Some of our most effective public servants were former professional athletes—Jack Kemp, Steve Largent, J.C. Watts to name a few."

Among those former Republican congressman, New York's Kemp and Oklahoma's Largent were in the National Football League, Oklahoma's

Watts was in the Canadian Football League.

Mr. Riemersma said, "To be successful in the NFL, you've got to learn to work with people with different backgrounds. In the locker room, you have 53 guys with different races, agendas, socio-economic status, world-views and, oh by the way, large egos. And yet, great leaders are able to unite those people and rally them around a common goal. Come to think of it—it's a lot like Congress."

Mr. Riemersma recently left the ultra-conservative Family Research Council as its U.S. northeast director in order to campaign full-time for "a Republican renaissance—a return to our conservative principles of governance."

He said, "Shame on our local elected officials who call themselves conservatives yet voted for the Michigan Business Tax." The reference was to ex-state Representative Bill Huizenga of Zeeland and recent Republican chairman in Hoekstra's 2nd District, who is in the primary mix, and state Senator Wayne Kuipers of Holland, who may run. Already announced is businessman Bill Cooper of Fruitport.

In a phone chat with Mr. Riemersma last week, he spoke of balancing economic and environmental interests—but with a decid-

ed tilt to the economic. He's "open-minded" on slant drilling from the Lake Michigan shoreline for oil.

### Endorsement Derby

Ann Arbor businessman Rick Snyder was endorsed for governor in Grand Rapids by former long-time Republican National Committeeman Chuck Yob, who remains influential in the party, and Jerry Zandstra, president of the Pro-Life Federation of Michigan and a one-time U.S. Senate contender.

Mr. Yob is no surprise. Son John Yob is a key Snyder strategist (also for Riemersma) and Chuck has been on the stump for John's clients. Conservative activist Zandstra could help with conservatives who suspect, with some justification, that Snyder is a tad too moderate on social issues.

Senator Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau, is assembling an impressive array of endorsements in her bid to be the 2010 GOP nominee for secretary of state—a nomination that will be determined at next year's state party convention.

One of the presiding officers at the convention will be Republican National Committeewoman Holly Hughes, who endorsed McManus last week.

It's not exactly an endorsement, but ex-Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Bill Schuette, whose district included all of northern Michigan, has hired ex-Republican State Chairman Rusty Hills to manage his 2010 campaign for attorney general, a nomination also determined by convention delegates.

Mr. Hills just left as communications director for Attorney General Mike Cox, who is running for governor.

Mr. Schuette—former congressman, state agriculture director, state senator and 1990 GOP U.S. Senate nominee—announces his AG bid this week, vowing to "put safety first and do what it takes to protect Michigan families."

### Early Ticket

In his quest for the 2002 Democratic nomination for governor, Congressman David Bonior tapped state Senator Alma Wheeler Smith as his running mate even before the gubernatorial primary.

Congressman Bonior finished a distant second to now-Governor Jennifer Granholm, who is terminated and backs Lt. Gov. John Cherry for the 2010 nomination. (Ex-Gov. Jim Blanchard finished third. Wheeler, now a state representative, seeks the 2010 gubernatorial nomination.)

Last week, 11 months before the primary, Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard, a former state senator who seeks the 2010 Republican nomination, selected Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, former Kent County clerk, as his running mate. The east-west ticket then went on a "Fix Lansing, Get Michigan Back to Work" tour that

included stops in Traverse City, Marquette and Alpena.

Not surprisingly, Democratic State Chairman Mark Brewer does not share my view that Bouchard made a good move. He said: "The people of Michigan deserve better than these two. Two deficient second-tier candidates do not add up to a ticket that helps Michigan."

### Congressional Watch

Representative Bart Stupak, D-Menominee, applauded President Barack Obama's decision to put tariffs and other protections in place on imports of passenger vehicle and light truck tires from China.

He said, "I am pleased President Obama has recognized the harmful impact this recent surge of dumping cheap tires from China has on manufacturers in communities throughout Michigan and across the country."

Representative Stupak and his colleagues on the executive committee of the Congressional Steel Caucus had sent a letter to Obama urging the action.

Its abuses abound, but ACORN has been a tough nut to crack down upon. So it was welcome last week when two northern Michigan Republican congressmen and our two Democratic Senators were in the chorus of well-deserved bipartisan criticism of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now.

Representative Dave Camp, R-Midland, the ranking Republican on the House Ways and Means Committee, urged the IRS to "sever all ties" with ACORN. It was exposed by hidden camera videos of conservative activists, first aired by Fox News, that some of its now-fired staffers allegedly committed fraud.

In a letter to IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman, Camp said that by referring low-income persons to ACORN, the IRS "continues to offer an implicit endorsement of their work. ... It is alarming to think that one the IRS's largest and rapidly growing partners in a tax preparation program allegedly employs individuals who encourage tax fraud."

Camp and Hoekstra were among more than 100 Republicans sending a letter to President Obama urging him to "publicly disclose and terminate" all federal funding to ACORN.

Also last week, Democratic senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow were in the 83-7 majority of the Senate voting to bar ACORN from receiving housing funds in a transportation and housing budget.

That action followed a decision by the U.S. Census Bureau to drop ACORN from community groups enlisted to help conduct the next count.

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

## The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

359 Reagon Street, PO Box 277, Saint Ignace, MI 49781

Telephone (906) 643-9150 • Facsimile (906) 643-9122

www.SaintIgnaceNews.com

USPS Periodical Publication Number - 462-380

ESTABLISHED 1878

Published each Thursday at Saint Ignace, Mackinac County, Michigan

Entered in Saint Ignace, Michigan Post Office as Periodical Mail Matter, Act of March 3, 1879  
Periodical Postage Paid at Saint Ignace, MI • Additional Postage Paid at Gaylord, MI  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to St. Ignace News, PO Box 277, St. Ignace, MI 49781

Volume 130, Number 25 Thursday, September 24, 2009

**Publisher/Editor**  
Wesley H. Maurer, Jr.  
**Associate Publisher**  
Mary R. Maurer  
**Publisher 1975-1995**  
Wesley H. Maurer, Sr. (1897-1995)

### Editor

Ellen Paquin, news@saintignaceneews.com

### Staff Writers

Karen Gould, karen@saintignaceneews.com  
Jonathan Eppley, jon@saintignaceneews.com  
Mark Tower, mark@stignaceneews.com  
Michael Ayala, mike@stignaceneews.com

### Advertising Department

Tammy Matson, David Moyalson  
ads@saintignaceneews.com

### Print Shop Manager

Sherry Cece

### Circulation Manager

Wendy Colegrove



**Subscriptions:**  
\$42 in Mackinac, Chippewa, Emmet, Luce, and Cheboygan counties.  
\$52 elsewhere in the United States and military post offices.  
\$35 for the Web edition at www.saintignaceneews.com

We take Visa, MasterCard, and Discover

## 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. A fee of \$35 will be charged for wedding photographs published 45 days or later, following ceremony. For weddings published 90 days or later following ceremony, the charge will be our open display advertising rate, (minimum \$50).

### Internet:

The complete edition of The St. Ignace News is available online at www.stignaceneews.com.

### Contact:

The St. Ignace News  
359 Reagon Street  
PO Box 277  
Saint Ignace, MI 49781  
(906) 643-9150 (phone)  
(906) 643-9122 (fax)  
e-mail: news@stignaceneews.com