

# Dallas Borough controls costs, holds line on taxes

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

Dallas Borough's \$508,537 budget, approved at the regular December 15 council meeting, held the line on last year's 16-mill property tax.

Total revenues, anticipated at \$501,657, have increased six percent from last year's \$498,588, according to borough manager Milt Lutsey.

The borough plans to begin the year with \$6,880 on hand, up from \$4,918 last year, Lutsey said.

Increases in the earned income tax of five percent or \$10,000 to \$200,000; cable television franchise fees, up nine percent or \$500 to \$5,400; and the motor tax fund allocation, up 20 percent or \$6,940

to \$41,495, have contributed to the increased revenues.

On the expense side, health insurance premiums are anticipated to cost the borough \$30,190 this year, an increase of \$3,590, or 13 percent.

Police officers will receive pay raises between 16 and 20 percent, and several road department employees will see between nine and 18 percent more in their paychecks. The borough clerk will receive a nine percent raise, while the salaries of the mayor, borough council and borough manager won't change.

Lutsey said that the borough's total real estate valuation, calculated by the Luzerne County Board of Assessment Appeals, increased four percent or \$321,490, to \$7,620,210 between January 8,

## Assessed property values grew by only 4 percent last year

and December 9, 1992.

Assessed land value increased \$31,050, or approximately three percent, to \$991,550, while assessed improvement value grew by \$290,890, to \$6,628,660.

Lutsey said that although property and earned income taxes make up most municipal revenues, not everyone pays their taxes on time.

He figures that between four and five percent of last year's anticipated tax money didn't come in.

"We get the money eventually

through delinquent tax collections, but that process can take more than a year," he said.

The earned income tax, which Lutsey terms the barometer of the overall economy, had decreased last year before increasing for 1993. Lutsey attributes the earned income tax's slow growth to the number of retired and unemployed residents, who don't earn taxable money. And the one percent tax collected must be evenly divided between the borough and the school district.

"As the economy recovers, I hope to see similar recovery in the earned income tax as more people's wages increase," he said.

Dallas Borough faces certain expenses not found in neighboring municipalities' budgets, Lutsey said. The borough expects to pay

\$20,400 next year for street lights and at least \$2,400 for water for fire hydrants, which other municipalities don't have.

Lutsey has explored many ways to help cut operating expenses without decreasing the quality of service to borough residents.

Using the office computer to print documents, substituting sodium vapor lamps for the old mercury vapor street lights and joining neighboring municipalities in a cooperative paving agreement, where paving materials are purchased in bulk and divided among the participants who also share manpower and equipment, have gone a long way in cutting costs, Lutsey said.

Substantial costs have been trimmed from the budget by having borough personnel do preven-

tive maintenance and repairs on road equipment and the two police cruisers, instead of sending them to repair shops.

With the help of area legislators, the borough has obtained a \$14,000 grant to fund work on the new zoning ordinance, a \$30,000 grant to pay for demolition of the former Hearthstone Pub and a \$50,000 grant for storm drainage work.

Grants in the works for 1993 include one for a leaf collection and composting program, a state \$9,000 grant for a police highway safety program and a \$4,000 county matching grant to upgrade the recreation facilities at the Kenneth A. Young Memorial Park on Burndale Avenue.



**EIGHTH-GRADE AUTHORS** - Students in Mrs. Sandra Weyman's eighth-grade Achievement Language Arts classes at Lake-Lehman Junior High, who read their stories for parents and friends, included, back row from left: Amber Posatko, Jessica Finch, Mrs. Weyman, Winter Rusiloski, Sarah Saylor, Debbie White and Sarah Roberts; front row from left: Doug Oldham, George Frank, Melissa Mitchell and Robert Campbell. (Post Photo/Grace R. Dove)



## Wins her dream house

Alisa Harris, 13, of Kunkle recently won a dollhouse chanced off at the "Dream Homes in Miniature" show. She and her sister, Kelly, 11, have already furnished it, down to a lighted Christmas tree and pets, with housewarming gifts from her friend, Devon Lewis. The daughter of Gerry and Maureen Harris, Alisa is eighth grade at Gate of Heaven and shares her "real" home with Kelly, brother Evan, 5, a horse, three cats and a pet mouse. (Post Photo/Grace R. Dove)

## Young authors present their work

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

Eight young authors made their public debut reading their short stories at a special holiday program, "Joyous Readings of 1992," Wednesday, December 16, at Lake-Lehman Junior High School.

Parents and friends were treated to well-written, heart-warming tales of kittens, a homeless man's family misunderstanding, a mother in a coma, a practical joke that backfired, Christmas surprises and a Confederate soldier sheltered by a Gettysburg family.

As part of a class project, Mrs. Sandra Weyman's 43 achievement language arts students had written their short stories focusing on the goodness of humanity, later choosing the four best stories from each class to be read aloud at the program.

Readings included "A Christmas Wish" by Amber Posatko, "The Ultimate Sacrifice" by Jessica Finch, "Romeo and Juliet as Kittens" by Rob Campbell, "A Mysterious Visitor" by Winter Rusi-

loski, "The Old Man on the Corner" by Debbie White, "Shelter from Heartache" by Sarah Saylor, "The Joke" by George Frank and "A Season of Surprises" by Melissa Mitchell.

Doug Oldham made introductions, while Sarah Roberts gave a short closing speech.

Winter Rusiloski's "A Mysterious Visitor" was dedicated to a close friend whose mother is recovering from a serious stroke. "I often think about her," Winter said.

"It was difficult for the students to select the eight top stories. I'm very proud of all 43 writers," Mrs. Weyman said.

The ancient art of storytelling provides a wonderful mode of self-expression, enriches the imagination, encourages personal reflection, stimulates one's sense of humor and encourages a love of literature, Mrs. Weyman added.

All of the students' short stories were displayed for visitors to enjoy while sampling punch and cookies after the readings.

This was the junior high school's first public story-reading program.

## Can you save Christmas for a youngster?

Around 12 Noon on Thursday, December 17, some youngster's present to his parents fell from a van that was traveling on Church Street in Dallas.

Henry Todd stopped and picked up a package wrapped in white butcher paper after he saw it fall from a maroon Plymouth or Dodge van. It is labeled "To Mom and Dad, Love Mark."

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## Trash and recycling pickup schedule changes for holidays

Due to the holidays there will be no pickup of trash or recyclables on Christmas Day, Friday, December 25, 1992, New Year's Day, Friday, Jan. 1, 1993.

For both weeks the schedule change will be as follows: Friday pickup will be on Saturday. Also due to the large volume of trash generated during the holidays there will be no bag limit beginning the week of

December 21, and ending January 2, 1993. This will be in effect for two weeks only and the two bag limit will resume the week of January 4, 1993.

Even though there is no bag limit for the holiday season please try to recycle as much as possible.

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