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Back Mountain depends on volunteers in time of need

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Every time their pagers beep, they must immediately leave families, meals, showers and even municipal meetings to go out at all hours, in all kinds of weather.

They are the few who serve many, the volunteers who man the ambulances and fire engines in the Back Mountain's 14 fire and ambulance companies, whose only payment for their many hours of training and work is knowing that they are providing the best possible emergency services to

their neighbors.

"We're always looking for volunteers. Many families new to the Back Mountain may not realize that we're not a paid municipal staff," said Dallas Fire and Ambulance Company's chief Robert Besecker.

Besecker recalled Dallas Fire Company's worst fire a year ago, when a 100 member all-volunteer force from five Back Mountain fire companies battled the Labor Day morning blaze which destroyed Daring's Market on Route 415.

Besecker said that his men had stayed inside until the wrappers

of candy bars on a shelf near the cash register burst into flame.

"You always must consider safety as the first priority. It was time to get out. I ran to one of our engines and hit four long blasts on the air horn - our signal to get out immediately," he said.

Dallas and several area fire companies routinely tour area manufacturing plants, such as Offset Paperback, Payne Printery and Native Textiles, to review fire prevention and fighting plans with plant managers, a fire safety program which has been very successful, Besecker said.

"You never take chances with people's lives," he said.

Training requirements

Safety and training are the words most often used by fire and ambulance company chiefs.

Although the state has no training requirements for volunteer firefighters and the federal government only requires firefighters to take a hazardous materials recognition and awareness course, local fire companies offer up to 250 hours per year of training: weekly and monthly work nights, special classes and fire schools

sponsored by the Back Mountain Firefighters' Association, and a well-developed mutual aid system which Besecker also credits with being instrumental in getting a 911 system into the Back Mountain.

The state also offers a 66-hour course in the essentials of fire-fighting, according to Trucksville Fire Chief Brian Johnson. The fire company pays for any tuition costs.

Although Trucksville Fire Company has 89 members, only about 30 are active, Johnson said. The daytime hours, when

many people are at work or school, are when they're needed the most.

Ambulance companies also need volunteers

The same is true for ambulance companies, whose crew members may not be available during the day.

"During working hours or when people are away, sometimes it's tough to get a crew together," said Jackson Township ambulance assistant chief, Jay Wilkes. "We need more volunteers. When we

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Dallas pot field goes up in smoke

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

The Dallas Township police reaped a bountiful harvest of 25 marijuana plants with a street value between \$3,700 and \$5,000 Wednesday, September 1 from a property in East Dallas.

According to police chief Carl Miers, the plants, ranging from 4-1/2 to nearly 6-1/2 feet tall, had been found in an area of dense brush only 100 feet from the road by a hunter out spotting deer for archery season.

"The plants had obviously been cultivated," Miers said. "We found wire mesh plant protectors commonly used to keep animals from nibbling garden plants around each marijuana plant."

Nearly ready for harvest, the plants were hidden in dense brush on a well-drained hillside, Miers said. "Someone knew what they were doing when they set it up. It had been very well-planned."

Marijuana is usually harvested around the end of September, when the plants are in the seed stage, Miers said. The

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UP IN SMOKE - Dallas Township roadmaster Frank Wagner sprays fuel oil onto a pile of 25 marijuana plants burned by township police after having been seized September 1.

Rt. 309 work to begin next week

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Truck drivers call it "road destruction."

Other drivers call it mostly unprintable names.

It - a long-awaited road improvement project and accompanying big orange barrels denoting new traffic patterns - has come to the Back Mountain.

Beginning Monday, September 13, workers from American Asphalt will begin work on the first of three phases of a \$2.5 million project which will once again change the face of Routes 309 and 415.

The first phase calls for widening Route 309 between Center Street at Burger King and North Pioneer Avenue near Howard "Duke" Isaacs' car dealership,

upgrading of drainage ditches, installation of curbing to control traffic flow into and out of businesses along this stretch and the addition of a center turning lane for vehicles entering these businesses.

During construction, Route 309 will become one lane in each direction, with a center lane reserved for turns, between Center Street and North Pioneer Ave. as workers begin to widen the highway's southbound side, according to Rolly Keisling, community relations coordinator for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT).

New drainage pipes at Isaacs', Holcomb Road and Southfork Floral will also be installed, Keisling said. While crews are doing

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Tijuana Bar too noisy, says LCB

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

A notice of violation of noise regulations sent to Thom Greco, license holder for the Tijuana Bar at the amphitheater may be music to the ears of Harveys Lake noise foes.

According to Sergeant David Douglas, district office commander of the Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement in Wilkes-Barre, the notice of violation was sent to the bureau's Harrisburg offices and a copy sent to Greco by registered mail August 24. Within a month, the Harrisburg office will issue a citation against Greco.

Since the beginning of the summer, Douglas has received "numerous" complaints from Harveys Lake residents about music emanating from the Tijuana bar, which residents say can be heard more than 2-1/2 blocks

away. Noise which can be heard outside a licensed establishment (a bar or restaurant serving liquor) is a violation of the state liquor code, Douglas said.

A hearing on the citation will be scheduled before the administrative law judge in Wilkes-Barre within the next six months, Douglas said.

"If the judge finds him guilty, we'll cite him every time that noise from the bar can be heard on the street," he said.

Fines range from \$50 to \$1,000, with repeated offenses possibly leading to suspension of the establishment's amusement permit or liquor license, Douglas said.

Although liquor is sold and consumed in the Tijuana's licensed area, while live bands play in the bar's unlicensed area where liquor isn't allowed, both parts of

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It's fair time!

Luzerne County Fair starts Wednesday. Complete schedule on page 13.



■ Fall Sports Preview
12 pages of high school teams. Special section inside.

■ Orthodox church struggles to survive in Lehman. Page 3.

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