Shavertown **Fire Auxiliary** donates funds for equipment

By SANDY PEOPLES

SHAVERTOWN - "The primary purpose of our organization is to support the men and women who volunteer to protect our community every day," said Holly Joyce, a member of the Shavertown Volunteer Fire Company Ladies Auxiliary. "When they need equipment, we try to raise the money to buy it by having bake sales, raffles, Welch cookie sales, etc."

This year the auxiliary raised \$1,000 which paid for a circular chain saw, a 24-foot aluminum extension ladder, and other tools needed by the department. They are an all-volunteer group which has been in existence since 1961. It has 15 active members.

"We need the equipment," said Fire Chief Gary Beisel. "If they didn't raise the money for it, we wouldn't have what we need to fight the fires. They are one of the few active auxiliaries left, and they work very hard to sup-

Firefighters and police officers have been viewed in a new light



Auxiliary members and fire fighters pose with recently purchased equipment. From left, kneeling: Mary Jane Konek, auxiliary president and Capt. Jeff Beisel.

Standing: Florence Stella, life member; Holly Joyce; Betsy Joyce, vice president; Ann Marie Konek,

secretary; Chief Gary Beisel. since September 11. Chief Beisel

relayed a story that happened recently when some of his crew were out of town attending a fire school. "The men and women

to dinner. A man, who was a totable just to say 'thank you.' Mo- community."

had their Shavertown Fire Com- ments like that make all of us pany t-shirts on when they went proud to be firefighters and thankful that we enjoy the suptal stranger, walked over to their port from the auxiliary and the

Lake-Lehman tax

(continued from page 1)

takes revenue from the school

The largest financial drains come from the reduction in assessments of businesses such as the Woodlands. PNC bank recently received a property assessment reduction at several of its branches. A gas station affected by a gasoline leak a few years ago is reportedly paying \$1 per year in taxes as it was valued as useless land, said Ed Chesnovitch, a resident of Jackson Township. When these high value property assessments are reduced, the dollar amount lost can be substantial, resulting in pressure to raise millage rates.

Properties in Luzerne County have not been assessed for nearly 40 years and for an obvious reason. Elected officials pushing for assessments could become very unpopular to voting owners of older properties assessed at lower values who do not wish to see their taxes rise. On the other hand, young couples just buying a new home aren't so happy with the inequity in assessment

"If you own a home that was last assessed in 1960, vou are paying taxes on that 1960 assessment which might be \$30,000," Roberts explained. "If you were to build the same house now, at \$120,000, you can see how your taxes would go

Many Pennsylvania school boards have been fighting these appeals in court, resulting in more costs to the school districts. Additionally, during last week's board meeting Savage said, "The county is now, and I believe for the first time, saying to the school district and municipalities that they will not procure a certified appraiser to handle all these assessment ap-

The county is suggesting the school district carry the majority of the cost burden of hiring an appraiser for testimony and appraisal purposes, with local municipalities sharing a smaller portion. "I can't remember a request like this in the past," Savage added. "The county always

handled it." Savage recommended the board adopt a wait-and-see approach to learn if any of the local municipalities received the same request and if they are going to contribute to the appraiser's fees. "If not, then the whole scheme is kind of jaded," Savage

A number of residents at the meeting cautioned the board to take preparatory measures. Angelo DeCesaris. Sr. summed it up. "I think the board had better start preparing, because the next few years there's going to have to be something done.'

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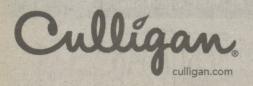
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