



United We Stand

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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS & LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS



BRIDE & GROOM

Special section inside this issue



SPORTS

Lake-Lehman grapplers advance to state quarters. Pg 9.



LAST CHANCE!

Check out what makes them tick. Pages 4-5.

Dallas Twp. police get most of their demands in arbitration award

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — After more than a year of arbitration between the Dallas Township Board of Supervisors and the Dallas Township Police Officers' Association, both parties accepted an award that weighed heavily in the seven officers' favor.

"The police department was satisfied," said Brian Feeney, representative for the Dallas Township Police Officers' Association. "The arbitrator ultimately

gave (us) somewhere around a 5 percent raise and he eliminated the 50 percent co-pay for health care."

Feeney said when the previous contract expired December 31, 2001, and the two entities sat down to negotiate a new contract, the association and the township couldn't come to agreement on those two issues.

Feeney said the officers' association wanted to be brought up to the same pay level as policemen in the surrounding municipalities of Dallas Borough

and Kingston Township.

"They were getting paid a lot more than we were and Dallas Township is 22 square miles whereas Dallas Borough is two square miles. We thought we should get paid at least what they were," said Feeney. Feeney said in the end, the arbitrator awarded the officers what amounted to an average 5 percent raise.

The arbitration award contains salary increases ranging from 3 percent to 7.5 percent per year, depending on the ex-

perience level of the officer. The lowest salary, Cadet A, is \$22,900 in the first year of the four-year agreement, and rises to \$25,050 in the final year. The highest paid officer, Patrolman IV, is paid \$32,590 the first year and \$38,000 the last.

The other sticking point, Feeney said, was the medical co-pay for officers hired after 1997. The previous contract stipulated that those full-time officers would pay for half their medical benefits, while the other officers paid nothing.

"The only people (employed by the township) that had to pay half their health care were (officers) Fitch and Rosencrans," said Feeney.

Feeney said the co-pay issue was one of fairness. "We didn't have a problem paying a percentage of our health care as long as it included everybody that worked for the township," said Feeney. But, he said, the township was asking two officers to pay for half of their

See TOWNSHIP POLICE, pg 8

Could traffic in Dallas go 'round and 'round?

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS — As discussion about traffic congestion at the center of Dallas Borough went 'round and 'round, that pattern emerged as a possible future path for cars and trucks.

At Monday's public meeting between borough council and the hopeful developer of a large retail complex in Dallas Township, Chuck Mattei, district engineer for the state Department of Transportation (PennDOT), suggested the idea of a roundabout to ease the troubled "five points" intersection.

"It would give the best bang for your buck; traffic is always moving and it has a calming aspect," said Mattei.

Mattei suggested creating a round traffic pattern in the center of Dallas as an alternative to making Lake Street one-way.

The meeting was part of a process in which the developer gains a highway occupancy permit from PennDOT, which must be granted before the plan can

move ahead.

"We've been looking for an ideal place in Northeast PA," to construct a roundabout, said Mattei. He said communities interested in a traffic circle have been going through a candidacy process.

Mattei explained a roundabout removes the need for lights. Instead, cars traveling on streets that feed into the main downtown intersection would be free to enter the circle surrounding the roundabout at any time.

Mattei said a roundabout could handle the levels of traffic present in Dallas, and he could put it into the department's 12-year schedule, due for revision this spring and summer.

"How does that tie into what the developer wants to do?" asked one audience member.

"Well it would tie in perfectly if you had a longer time frame, but it's not going to help him in the short term," Mattei responded.

For now, changing Lake Street

See ROUNDABOUT, pg 7



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Irving, Mihoko and May Stettner, of Dallas, were among many people taking advantage of pleasant weekend weather at Frances Slocum State Park. Story and more photos about winter activities there on page 8.

Opposition voiced to Lake Street as one-way

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS — In his continuing effort to move ahead with the development of a "big box" retail store on 50 acres of land in Dallas Township, J. Napolio, appeared before the Dallas Borough Council to again discuss traffic congestion at the main Dallas intersection. This time, at the request of council, the state Department of Transportation (PennDOT) joined the conversation to lend insight into the borough's options.

The "five points" currently operates at a level of service D in the evenings and on Saturday. With the addition of the development planned for the former Yalick farm at the Route 415/118 intersection, service would degrade to a level F. PennDOT uses an A-F scale to rate congestion, much like school grades.

"Their (the developer's) recommendation is to turn one of our streets one-way," said John Oliver, Vice President of Dallas Borough Council. "They have presented some evidence that would indicate that probably would alleviate a lot of the situa-

"I think what you're asking for is land use planning. It's beyond PennDOT, it's really a land use issue."

Charles Mattei
PennDOT engineer

tion. However the people that live on that street and the people that drive school buses on that street and the people that come up and down from College Misericordia may not agree with that."

Oliver asked Charles Mattei, District Engineer for PennDOT, if there were any other options or plans already in the works for the area. Mattei responded that there were no current plans to ease the traffic burden in Dallas. Mattei added that PennDOT has not done any long-term planning because the intersection is still functioning at an acceptable level.

See LAKE STREET, pg 7

Insect destroying hemlocks at lake

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

HARVEYS LAKE — The woolly adelgid insect is wreaking havoc on hemlocks in the Back Mountain, but here, because of the close proximity to the lake, regulations prohibit spraying insecticides as protection. Residents are left wondering if there is anything they can do to save their trees.

Concerned by what they call an "insect infestation" of the borough's hemlocks, members of the Harveys Lake Protective Association have planned a public meeting with Urban Forester Vinnie Cotrone for February, hoping to find explanations and solutions.

The meeting will take place Tuesday, Feb. 11 at Grotto Pizzeria, starting at 7:30 p.m.

See HEMLOCKS, pg 3



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Tony Kalinosky of Kalinosky Landscaping pointed out the woolly adelgid's egg casings covering the tree's needles.

Expected insurance cost reductions for Lake-Lehman fail to materialize

LEHMAN TWP. — An expected reduction in expenses paid to the Northeast Pennsylvania Health Trust never came to fruition this month, although Lake-Lehman School Board Members say that's what they were promised.

During the January work session, Member Charles Boytin questioned if the district had seen a decrease in rates as promised last year by Andrew P. Marko, the trust's executive director. That anticipated decrease, he continued, played a

role in the district's negotiations for a new five-year teachers contract.

The consortium provides health-care coverage for all Luzerne County school districts except Hazleton Area and Crestwood. It is funded by district contributions and is run by representatives of member districts' labor and administration.

Member Moderno Rossi said he spoke to Marko recently and was told not to expect a decrease until July.

In other business:

- High School Principal Michael Gokay presented an overview of a new curriculum guide being designed by district officials. Gokay also reviewed several class changes he would like to eventually see implemented at the high school. Among them is the creation of several new classes including an SAT prep class, honors biology and music theory. He is also looking into eliminating several classes and making others independent study courses.
- Four bids have been submitted for

consideration regarding the refurbishment of stadium bleachers. The low bid of \$158,300 was given by Recreation Resource of Kennett Square, Pa. Although no contract has yet been awarded, other bids came in at \$201,000, \$297,000 and \$382,000. The low bid for replacing the bleachers was \$297,000.

by Kalen Churcher

This article appeared in original form in the Times Leader.

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