

Last-minute gifts at the library. Page 4



THE POST

50¢

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

Property tax passed

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — The township has a 2004 budget that, for the first time in 10 years, includes a property tax.

At the eighth meeting since October 27 at which the budget was discussed, the supervisors voted 3-2 to add a 10-mill property tax to the township's revenue stream, nearly closing a deficit of more than \$200,000.

The second and final reading of the budget is scheduled for December 30, just a day before the final deadline for adoption set by state and township rules.

A proposed "business privilege tax" that might have raised as much as \$87,000 was rejected at a special hearing Tuesday night, after several small business owners pleaded

■ Ban on open burning okayed at 11 p.m. Pg 2.

their case that the \$600 annual levy would be unbearable and would result in either their closing or moving from the township.

"I will have to close, so you won't get the money anyway," said Diane Pocono, who operates Nails to Di For from her home on North Pioneer Avenue, about the business tax. Pocono said she took in less than \$5,000 last year and expects to do less business this year as she prepares for the birth of her second child.

Like other businesspersons who spoke throughout the hearing, Pocono questioned

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POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Kingston Township Solicitor Ben Jones III, left, conferred with Paul Sabol, chairman of the supervisors, during the meeting to adopt the 2004 budget.

School officials not upset by faulty fire alarm

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — The school board was told December 8 that the Dallas high school fire alarm system failed to function properly during an October fire. The district's fire alarm company also explained the system continues to be unreliable.

With the replacement project most likely going to bid, the high school could be without a guaranteed alarm system for more than six weeks.

Solicitor Ben Jones III said if a fire erupts in the meantime, the school

district could be held liable.

Superintendent Gilbert Griffiths said the fire occurred in a cafeteria dryer and was put out by the fire department. He said it caused no substantial damage.

Representatives from the Simplex fire alarm company explained at the school board meeting that repairs made to the 40-year-old system since the fire are only temporary. They said they couldn't guarantee the system would work if another fire occurs.

"We did some adjustments. It's working right now. If there's an alarm, it could lock up and cause a hazard," said Scott Eyerman of Simplex.

The representatives explained the system passed a recent test conducted by their company. Eyerman, however, still warned about its reliability.

"There is a problem on the system

See ALARM, pg 3

20-year tradition carries on

By M.B. GILLIGAN
Post Correspondent

LEHMAN TWP. — 'Twas the night before Christmas recently for Kindergarten students at Lehman-Jackson Elementary School, when first and third grade students were treated to a dress rehearsal of the annual show.

"They've done the exact same show for over 20 years and the first time parents are always impressed," said Robert Kunkle, principal. "I guarantee that the All Purpose Room will be full of parents and grandparents and they will all love the show."

Tommy Williams played the role of Papa for the show that recreates the famous poem. He wore a blue bathrobe as he "flew to the window and threw open the sash." When asked what he would like to receive for Christmas this year, he mentioned a remote control car, specifically a silver Hummer.

See TRADITION, pg 3



POST PHOTO/M.B. GILLIGAN

"...Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse." Pictured, from left, are the mice: Cheyenne Summer Dries, Katie Supe, Corey Weaver, and Joseph Sharon at a dress rehearsal for the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School play.

Roundabout is on PENNDOT's radar screen

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS — PENNDOT is looking for a place to put a roundabout and thinks Dallas Borough may fit the bill.

Few other possibilities exist to solve traffic congestion in the troubled "five-points" area. However, budget constraints could prevent the project from being completed.

"We're looking for a place to do one (a roundabout) and it does offer the potential in Dallas to solve some problems," said Bob Doble, PENNDOT acting district executive. "To be honest, there aren't a lot of other alternatives (for the Dallas intersection)."

Doble said last week the round traf-

"You could consider one-way streets. The only other possibility is widening the area."

Bob Doble

PENNDOT acting district executive

fic pattern is one of only three options available to address the downtown's problems.

"You could consider one-way streets," he suggested. "The only other possibility is widening the area" — something he said would be "very problematic" and "not going to happen" because buildings would have to be removed.

The only other option is the round-

about, a modernized re-engineered traffic circle. The pattern is preliminarily projected to meet the area's challenges and only require the removal of the closed Sunoco gas station — something a developer has already agreed help accomplish.

PENNDOT and many people in the community are behind the project including College Misericordia and the Dallas community visioning program.

Doble said too many projects and not enough money could prevent the roundabout from being funded. Dallas' roundabout is one of about 30 projects in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties that are being evaluated for competitive state funding. Complicating things further, the Dallas area has asked for funding for a number of projects. Doble named Dug Road, Church Hill Road, portions of Routes 118 and 309 as some of the additional "Dallas area" projects also in need of funding.

Asked whether any of those projects could take precedence, Doble responded, "There have been some fatalities on 118, that's important."

But the outlook is not entirely

See ROUNDABOUT, pg 8

Township trail gets a sign, but ownership is a mystery

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — The bottom of a recently clearcut area off of Sago Street is the site of a new walking trail. But neither the township, nor the adjoining property owner knows who owns it.

Bob Tupper, a 40-year Sago Street resident, said he first noticed the "Dallas Township Park Walking Trail" sign two weeks ago.

Tupper said the trail, located next to the Dallas Township park, has always been there. This is the first time, however, the trail — which begins in a wooded area and proceeds along a Toby's Creek tributary — has been marked as a public trail.

Shortly after discovering the sign, Tupper said he went to a Dallas Township Board of Supervisors meeting to find out if tree debris left over from re-

cent clearcutting would be removed by the township.

He said he was told by Frank Wagner, president of the board of supervisors, the township didn't own the property, the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association did.

Since then, however, both Len Kozick, township zoning officer, and Wagner have said they are not sure who owns the property.

Kozick said Judy Rimple, president of the trails association, did inquire about using the property for the Back Mountain Trail.

Shortly after that inquiry, Kozick went to the courthouse in Wilkes-Barre to find a map that would spell out the trail's ownership. None were available.

Without proof of ownership, a formal use agreement between the township

See TRAIL, pg 8



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

A sign has been posted to mark the Dallas Township Park Walking Trail, although township officials aren't sure the trail is theirs.

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Frosty and friends visit Trucksville Nursery School.

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