

Business

(continued from page 1)

mation on the association's web site; to create an entrepreneurial program to encourage and aid small business startups, and to invite new committee members.

Banta said a decline in the business community began several years ago when Commonwealth Telephone moved 300 employees out of Dallas Township to take advantage of tax incentives offered by a Wilkes-Barre Keystone Opportunity Zone. A string of losses have occurred since, including the movement of 100 jobs at epic from Twin Stacks Center, and the ENCON closure last spring, which laid off 97 workers.

You see stores boarded up — our feeling is that's not where we want to be.

Lynn Banta
BMBPA President

Banta ties the closing of smaller businesses like restaurants and gas stations to the loss of those businesses.

"If there aren't a certain number of people working in the Back Mountain, businesses can't survive," she said.

In the last year alone, Pizza Hut, Domino's, Mimmo's Pizza, Pizza Hut and Big Apple Bagel — all located along either Route 309 or Route 415 — have closed. There are two boarded up gas stations in downtown Dallas Borough and another in Kingston Township



Members of a committee formed by the Back Mountain Business and Professional Association met to begin formation of a Back Mountain Economic Development Council. From left, seated: Lynn Banta, Bobbie Steever. Standing: Tom Robinson, Nancy Eckert, Michael MacDowell, Atty. Bernard Walter. They are standing by a board that contains the group's mission statement.

next to McDonald's. Rave's Garden Center in Shavertown has announced it is closing and Yesterday's restaurant in Trucksville is also vacant.

With the fear that other businesses may close or move to another location, Banta said the group was faced with a decision. "Should we remain this quasi-social organization, or did we want to do something?"

Members of the association have been meeting since 2002 to discuss what to do about the

decline. Some of those meetings were with the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce.

Banta said there is a large-scale economic development effort being conducted in and around Wilkes-Barre by the Chamber of Commerce and newly elected officials, but it doesn't address the Back Mountain's situation.

"We need to make sure that were main consistent and also grow in that process," said Banta.

Banta said the business association has boosted its membership by 48 percent in the past year, and now has 148 members.

"We feel if we don't get involved, we have no chance of preventing it (more businesses losses) from happening again. It's time for us to have a bigger presence," said Banta.

To get more information on the BMBPA, go to their website at www.bmbpa.com.

Honors classes planned for Junior-Senior HS

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

LEHMAN TWP. — Curriculum changes could be coming to Lake-Lehman's Junior-Senior High School building.

Citing No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, Co-Principal Michael Gokay has proposed several course changes and additions.

The school board will vote on the changes at Tuesday's public meeting.

"With NCLB, it's (the curriculum review process) a much more serious review. We want to make sure the curriculum is in line with state and national standards," Gokay said.

He said after completing the review, it was apparent there was some duplication of course material occurring between the two schools.

"We want to make sure the courses are sequenced. This way we're not building a foundation on top of a foundation," Gokay said.

At the junior high level, Gokay is proposing to drop five courses and to add seven. He said for the first time Algebra I Honors, will be offered at the junior high level. Only pre-algebra was offered previously.

At the senior high, Gokay is recommending World History I be dropped and World History, Algebra II Honors, and Chemistry Honors, be added.

Gokay also proposes to do away with course terms "Achievement" and "Accelerated," and instead use the more universally recognized "Honors."

Other proposed changes:

- Incorporate the school newspaper into the journalism course.
- Add specific criteria to the young scholar program.
- Pilot two physical education courses.

Gym floor to be protected for donkey game

LEHMAN TWP. — The annual donkey basketball game will take place as usual and on the new gymnasium floor, Lake-Lehman acting Superintendent Robert Roberts said at Tuesday's meeting.

School Board member Harold Cornell Jr. questioned if the game, scheduled for later this month, will damage the newly constructed junior/senior high school gymnasium. Roberts assured Cornell a cover will be placed over the floor to eliminate any problems.

James Mahon, board president, said this year's game will allow about 2,000 spectators, compared to 500 in previous years. All proceeds go into the senior class fund.

In other business:

- Tracy Hollowich is expected to be named assistant secondary principal at a salary of \$50,000. The board will approve Hollowich next week.

—By Kalen Churcher



Members of the Dallas Mini-Mounts age-group team lined up before a recent meet.

Pool

(continued from page 1)

joy the camaraderie, team concept, have a good time and learn something," said Stretanski.

Dallas Mini-Mounts swim team age groups are: 8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, and 13-14. The minimum age is 6.

The response to the program has been phenomenal. "We were hoping for 30 kids to start — total. We sent out flyers in the schools, had ads in the papers, and notices on television," says Stretanski.

Today, there are 65 children in the program, with four coaches. At practices, the pool is overflowing with children swimming both ways in a single swim lane. The noise is welcomed and the fun contagious.

Though this program will

"It was a dream to develop an age-based group swim program for young kids."

Matt Stretanski
Dallas High School swim coach

end in February, plans are being made through the U.S. Swim and Diving Club for a similar summer program for children starting May 10. That program will be less team-oriented, and the meets will be open and invitational.

Interested persons can call Kathy Berger at 675-0817 or Ken Greenwood at 675-2759.

Dallas School District hires business manager

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — The School Board voted unanimously at its January 12 meeting to hire Grant Palfey as a new full-time business manager. Palfey replaces part-time manager Al Melone, who resigned in October.

Palfey was hired at a rate of \$55,000 annually, plus benefits. Board president David Usavage said Melone was paid \$59,000 with no benefits. Usavage said having the full-time manager will be more expensive (due to benefits), but said a full-time manager will be better able to serve the district.

"It will be a couple of dollars more, but having someone here full-time will do nothing but better serve the needs of the district," said Usavage.

Usavage said Palfey has two sisters that work in the district as teachers.

During the meeting, resident Russell Ockenhouse said he was concerned about the safety of the children and asked what was being done about the faulty fire alarm system. After an executive session following the regular meeting, board members authorized Building and Grounds Supervisor Mark Kraynack to solicit bids to repair the system.

Kraynack said although there is a malfunction on the system, it is working as it always has. "The kids are safe," he said. He later added, "At the moment, the system works fine."

In other business, Tracy Morgan was hired as a long-term 5th grade substitute to replace Catherine Tasko.



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

The Dallas School Board appointed Grant Palfey to be the district's new full-time business manager. Pictured from left, Superintendent Gil Griffiths and Palfey.

Recovery fund for Dallas fire victims

A fire recovery fund has been established for the family of Gordon Witt. The Witt home on Main Street in Dallas was heavily damaged by fire on December 28. Gordon Witt is a volunteer with the Trucksville Fire Department, which has set up an account to accept dona-

tions to assist the family of five.

Contributions may be sent to: The Gordon Witt Fire Victim Family Fund c/o First Liberty Bank 165 S. Memorial Hwy. Trucksville, PA 18708

Correction

An editorial in last week's Post stated that J. Carl Goodwin had been appointed to the Kingston Township Board of Supervisors. Goodwin was elected to the board in 2001, and began serving a four-year term in January, 2002.

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Post drop box update

The building that housed The Post until October has been sold, the drop off box there has been closed. A box at the Uni-Mart in Dallas, across from the Dallas Shopping Center, remains open. News items, photos and other correspondence can be deposited there at any time. Please do not place cash or checks in the box.

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