

KINGSTON TOWNSHIP

# Agreement reached for East Center Street bridge

By REBECCA BRIA  
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The board of supervisors approved a resolution on March 10 pertaining to engineering work on the East Center Street Bridge project.

The resolution provides for a supplemental engineering agreement and authorizes board chairman Jim Reino to execute documents with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation regarding the agreement.

According to Reino, the bridge project began 10 or 11 years ago and has been dormant since.

Reino said several people who own property adjacent to the bridge have been unwilling to negotiate a fair sale price for land needed for the project, which has caused it to lag. The project is currently set to begin in 2013, he said.

Engineers who have completed work on the project are asking for additional payment from PennDOT due to the escalating costs since the project began more than a decade ago, Reino said.

**Public hearings set**

Public hearings have been scheduled for the next supervisors meeting on April 14 regarding three separate matters.

The township wants to amend the administrative code to repeal the killed in service death benefit in the police pension plan to comply with Act 51 of 2009, which removes the death benefit responsibility from municipalities and gives it to the state.

The township is also considering altering the term of office for zoning hearing board members from three years to five years.

Reino said this will put the township in line with state regulations on the length of service.

Finally, amendments are proposed for the fee schedule, which requires the payment of various fees

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LAKE TOWNSHIP

# Gas drilling sparks future maintenance concerns

By EILEEN GODIN  
Dallas Post correspondent

Gas drilling expected to begin in Lake Township this summer sparked questions and concerns from supervisors and residents.

On March 10, supervisors discussed precautions needed before EnCana Oil and Gas Inc., a partner of WhitMar Exploration Company, sets up a drilling operation off Zosh Road near the border with Lehman Township.

Supervisor Amy Salansky said she will try to arrange for a meeting with EnCana to address all concerns.

Chairman Lonnie Piatt said supervisors are looking in to bonding roads for weight limits. Bonding roads and posting weight limits is expected to help the township protect roads from damage caused by heavy trucks.

The procedure to bond a road requires an engineer to study road materials and composition and determine how much weight those materials can sustain.

Piatt said about 75 percent of the township's roads are dirt and gravel roads. Zosh Road is one of them. Piatt said the gas company has agreed to assume responsibility for repairing and maintaining Zosh Road.

Resident Charles Kohl asked supervisors which routes the gas trucks would be using, expressing concerns about the trucks possibly blocking roads and affecting traffic patterns. Salansky said an official route has not been submitted by EnCana, but assured that the trucks would not

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Snow melts from the fields at Brace's Orchard, Orange.



Spring plants begin to bloom at Norman Darling & Sons Farms and Greenhouses, Dallas.

# Has spring sprung?



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/FOR THE DALLAS POST

A goose spreads its wings welcoming the warm weather on the edge of the shrinking ice pack around Harveys Lake.

It's easy to forget about shoveling snow and scraping windshields when the temperatures climb into the high 40s. That's what happened last weekend when Mother Nature teased us with early signs of spring – and Back Mountain residents responded by doing the kinds of things we like to do in warmer weather. Beware, though, the month of March is notorious for being unpredictable.



Above: Snow melts off the fields at Brace's Orchard.

Left: Steven Darling walks through a greenhouse full of petunias starting to bloom at his family's greenhouse in Dallas.

# Dallas approves new Internet provider

By REBECCA BRIA  
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The Dallas School Board voted March 8 to remove its Internet tower and use a new Internet service provider even though it is locked in a contract.

Board members decided to begin using Frontier Communications for wireless Internet despite 15 months remaining in a contract with Luzeer Intermediate Unit.

Bill Gartrell, the district's technology director, said the district is currently using LIU for Internet service. The district is also leasing a Conterra Internet tower from LIU.

The tower needs to be moved because it is located behind the old maintenance building, which is scheduled to be torn down beginning March 29. The new maintenance building is complete and has been turned over to the district.

Gartrell said it would cost the

district \$27,500 to move the tower to a location near the new maintenance building.

He added the district is currently paying LIU a cost of \$1,891.86 per month. The district has a contract with LIU to provide services through Verizon. The contract does not expire until June 30, 2011.

The district will now pay \$1,045 per month for wireless Internet from Frontier Communications. No tower will be needed.

If the district cancels the contract with LIU as it plans, a termination fee may be applied to the monthly fee for the remaining 15 months of the contract. In addition, the district could face a possible cost of \$21,500 to remove the existing Internet tower as planned.

Superintendent Frank Galicki said the district is consulting solicitor Benjamin Jones concerning the matter.

**Public school district employee pension reform**

The board passed a resolution advocating immediate action by the Pennsylvania General Assembly to enact legislation regarding public school district employee pension program reform.

Board vice president Russ Bigus said board member Richard Coslett initiated the idea for the resolution. Bigus said several other school boards in the state have passed similar resolutions.

The Dallas School District and the state jointly contribute annually from public funds to the school employee pension program a fixed percentage rate of the eligible school employee's salary.

The district employer's rate of contribution for the 2009-10 school year is 4.78 percent. On July 1, the rate will jump to 8.22 percent for the 2010-11 school year.

According to the resolution, the school district employer's rate of contribution is expected to increase significantly in the

next four years to a projected 33.6 percent in the 2014-15 school year.

Under the resolution, the projected cumulative cost increase would be more than \$13.7 million for the district between the 2010-11 and 2014-15 academic years.

**High school project payment**

Payment in the amount of more than \$2.8 million was approved to several contractors for services completed on the new high school construction project from the capital projects fund.

The total cost of the project is expected to be about \$42.8 million.

**Personnel**

The board accepted the resignation of Frank Mariano as director of special education, effective June 30. Mariano, at the meeting, received a standing ovation from the board and members of the audience.

The following were hired as coaches for the 2010 spring athletic season: George Lazur, high school boys' and girls' track assistant coach, \$2,373; and Tom Gilroy, middle school boys' and girls' track assistant coach, \$1,989.

The following people were appointed as volunteer coaches: Shelby Scharff, girls' soccer; Joe Casey, boys' baseball; and Jill Chocallo, girls' softball.

**School volunteers**

A resolution was passed to approve a list of additional volunteers at Wycallis Elementary School for the current school year.

Coslett asked if the volunteers all have Act 34 clearances. Galicki said they are not required to as per district policy.

Bigus said he thinks the district needs to research whether the volunteers need the clearances. Galicki said the district will revisit the policy.