

The DALLAS POST

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L-L SCHOOL DISTRICT

Proposed budget has \$1M deficit

By SARAH HITE
shite@mydallaspost.com

Residents in the Lake-Lehman School District could see a tax increase for the 2011-12 fiscal year as the school board approved a proposed preliminary budget at a special meeting Wednesday evening that boosts tax rates in the two counties it serves.

The \$26.5 million proposed budget contains a \$1 million deficit and was approved by an 8-1 vote, with board member Harold Cornell voting against the spending plan.

Taxpayers in Luzerne County may see a millage rate increase of 4.18 percent, to 9.0602 mills, and those in Wyoming County may see a rise in the millage rate by 1.005 percent, to 58.7163 mills.

Thomas Melone, the district business manager, said the increases translate to an additional \$51.50 on an average assessed property value of \$141,626 in Harveys Lake Borough and Jackson, Lake, Lehman and Ross townships in Luzerne County. Those paying taxes in Noxen Township in Wyoming County could pay an additional \$9 on an average assessed property value of \$15,053. A mill is \$1 for every \$1,000 in assessed property value.

Because these percentages are above the state set Act 1 index, the district must apply for special exceptions from the state Department of Education to justify the millage increase. The Act 1 index of 2006 was created to control the percentage by which school districts can increase their tax rates, and it is dependent upon the statewide weekly wage index. This year's index is 1.7 percent.

Melone said the district plans to apply for exceptions in retirement contributions, maintenance of selected revenue sources and other areas.

Superintendent James McGovern said all areas of the budget have suffered due to economic restraints.

"We're going to have to do more with less and search for outside funding sources," he said of the budget.

Melone said the board was very conservative in its estimation of state funding, and he hopes the state contribution will increase after Gov. Tom Corbett makes his state of the union speech in March.

"We're just going to monitor all district expenses," said Melone. "This is just our first look at the budget."

McGovern said the budget is still a work in progress, and it may change between now and its passing in mid-summer. McGovern said the only thing that won't increase is the cost of expenditures.

The budget is available for public view in the district administration office next to Lehman-Jackson Elementary School on Market Street in Lehman Township.

In other news...

The board approved the hiring of April Eckert of Scranton as a temporary professional employee within the district. Her first assignment will be in the junior/senior high school as a biology teacher at a salary of \$41,253.

The next meeting of the Lake-Lehman School Board will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 21 in the junior/senior high school library.

SAYING 'NO' TO GAS



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Fifteen students from Dallas School District elementary schools braved the chilly weather Wednesday evening at the Dallas Township Municipal Building to express their feelings against a proposed natural gas compressor station that may be built about 1,150 feet away from the school district campus. The group, called KAPS - Kids Against Pump Station, also wore their T-shirts to school that day in protest of the planned facility. Chief Gathering LLC applied for special zoning exceptions to build a 5-acre compressor station off Hildebrandt Road. A hearing began on Feb. 9 and will continue at 7 p.m. on Feb. 23 in the Dallas Middle School auditorium. The facility will feature two metering stations, a building to house compressor engines, several storage tanks and a 100-foot communications tower. Participant Hunter Zimmerman, 11, of Dallas Township, said near the school doesn't seem like a good place for the compressor station. "It's not something I want to be around or want my friends to be around," he said. From left, first row, are Connor Bowden, Jessica Dixon, Katie Zimmerman, Savannah Zimmerman, Gracie Zimmerman, Amber Zimmerman, McKenzie Zimmerman and Logan Zimmerman. Second row, Hunter Zimmerman, David Smith, Caitlyn Walsh, Riley Oremus, Elliot Bowden, Hunter Dizon and Sammy Zimmerman.

Young people work hard to maintain their faith

Back Mountain Catholic Youth Council has been around for 10 years.

By SARAH HITE
shite@mydallaspost.com

The Back Mountain Catholic Youth Council has been a part of the region's community for more than 10 years, and young people are still working on keeping the group fun while maintaining their faith.

The council is comprised of two age groups: the junior high council includes members from grades 6 through 8, and the senior high council includes teens and young adults from grades 9 through 12.

Young parishioners from five area churches, including Our Lady of Victory in Harveys Lake, Gate of Heaven in Dallas, St. Therese's Church in Shavertown, St. Francis Cabrini in Wyoming and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Lake Silkworth, are all welcome to join the council.

The senior high group saw a lack of membership within the past two years and was reenergized this year with the help of the Rev. Daniel Toomey, of Gate of Heaven and Our Lady of Victory, as well as other young people in the parish.

The God Squad, which is

MORE INFO

For more information about the junior high youth council, contact Denise Murphy of St. Therese's Church by phone at 696-1144 or via e-mail at DMurphy@StThereses-Shavertown.com. For more information about the God Squad, the senior high group, contact Rev. Daniel Toomey of Our Lady of Victory and Gate of Heaven churches by phone at 675-2121.

what the senior high group was renamed, meets once a month and has taken members on trips to places such as the Romero Center in Camden, N.J. in the fall and a recent overnight pro-life march in Washington, D.C.

Both groups are similar in their missions. Denise Murphy, coordinator of the junior high council and former coordinator for the senior high group, said the purpose of the youth council is to have the younger generation create a strong bond with its faith and others.

"There's more of a sense of community," she said.

Toomey, who just started to restructure the senior high group last fall, said the youth council teaches young Catholics more about their faith and how it relates to the world.

"It's Catholic kids getting together for fellowship," he said. "It's an opportunity for them to be able to be good



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Elizabeth Bartoli, left, helps Ariana Notartomaso spike her hair during a Junior High Youth Council overnight lock-in at St. Therese's Church in Shavertown.

Christians, learn how to do service work and do some fun things, as well."

Toomey said the group also enables young adults to understand current issues through their faith and allows them to take a stand.

Kyle Salaway, 18, of Harveys Lake, accompanied his sister Cassie, 15, on the overnight pro-life march on Jan. 23. As a 6-year member of the Catholic youth council, he be-

lieves youth are not only the future of the church but that their actions are important now.

"If we don't get youth involved in church now, the youth will grow apart from church," he said. "Slowly, there will be no need for the church."

Kyle said the look on his sister's face throughout the overnight trip made him remember the first time he attended

the annual event.

"It was really amazing to see how many of the youth are involved and aware of what's happening," said Cassie.

The junior high group recently held an overnight lock-in at St. Therese's on Feb. 12, during which time youth members from local and distant churches joined together to play Bingo, go on a scav-

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