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Newly-formed BMT Chamber gaining foothold

By SARAH HITE
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With a new executive director, the months-old Back Mountain Chamber of Commerce is growing membership and gaining a strong foothold in the Back Mountain community and beyond.

Clare Parkhurst was recently hired as the chamber's part-time executive director, but she said it's more of a full-time job.

She manages to work for the chamber while also maintaining her own business, Black Sheep Advertising, located in Trucksville.

"It's a juggle, but I knew that going into it because it's in the beginning stages when we have to get things from the ground up working," she said.

Parkhurst was on the board of the Back Mountain Business Association in the past, and she believes the creation of the chamber has reinvigorated the

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the Back Mountain Chamber of Commerce, visit www.backmountainchamber.org or call the chamber offices at 675-9380.

sense of community amongst business owners and others in the region.

"There's just a perception that a chamber is more of a legitimate (organization)," she said.

Parkhurst said the business

association began in 1992, and likened the start of the chamber to a 20th anniversary celebration for Back Mountain businesses involved.

Chip Morgan, co-founder of the chamber and owner of Wilkes-Barre Bookkeeping in

Dallas Township, said the idea for the chamber came at a time when the Back Mountain Business Association was losing members.

"We had 110 (members), and they were loyal members, but at one time we had over 200 members," said Morgan.

Morgan said the business association was made possible solely by volunteers, and many of the same people were doing the work, in addition to running their own businesses.

"It was the same people over and over and over again, and like any organization, it gets tiring," said Morgan.

Though the chamber aims to remain mostly volunteer-based, Parkhurst said the new organization can offer much more with an executive director and assigned committee members.

"I've got a lot of support," said Parkhurst. "(The committees) take a lot of responsibility

See CHAMBER, Page 12

Littlest Scouts race stick horses

By SARAH HITE
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Scouts from Cub Scout Pack 232 dressed in full uniform spent hours at the annual Pinewood Derby on March 10 racing boats, frogs, cars and one race most other scout packs don't have - stick horses.

The Lion Cubs, an experimental Scout group started within the pack about three years ago, galloped around the Gate of Heaven gym with their self-decorated horses at the event. However, that could have been the last time the horses make it out the gate.

Trish Ash, a Cub Scout committee member, said the National Boy Scout Council is considering disbanding the Lion Cubs.

The littlest Scouts don't earn any badges, but the program gives the youngsters a chance to learn what being a Scout is all about.

"They learn the Scout principles, like respect and faith, and they have fun getting a little piece of the Scouts," she said.

The stick horse race is a rarity, said Ash, because the group itself is rare. She isn't aware of any other Lion Cubs locally, which makes the Scout pack even more special.

"It's a cool thing that helps the kids continue on in the Scouts," said Ash.

The tykes only raced for a few minutes on their horses on the weaving obstacle course, and

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Trish Ash
Cub Scout committee member

they were trying to beat their own times, not each other.

"It's a unique race, and it keeps them active," said Lion Cub leader Elsie Ryan, of Dallas.

She said she got her 5-year-old son Joey involved because children can learn so much at such a young age, and she felt the organization would teach him about important subjects like community service and citizenship.

"At this age, they're like sponges," said Ryan.

Heather Vieczorek, of Noxen, got her son Joshua involved in the Lion Cubs because she had other children in Scouts, but the group has given Joshua an outlet for helping others and learning camaraderie.

"His brother was a Lion Cub last year," she said. "It's a good organization and it gives the kids something to do. It gives them a taste of Scouting."

Vieczorek's other son moved up to the status of Tiger Cub, and he spent the afternoon racing frogs.

The wooden frogs have a hole

See HORSES, Page 13



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Dallas High School students Chris LaFratte, left, and Amber Habib are given a protein model to replicate at the annual Science Olympiad held at Penn State Wilkes-Barre.

Students love freedom Olympiad offers

By SARAH HITE
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Collin MacMullen, 12, spent his first time at the Regional Science Olympiad competition enjoying not just the various science projects, but the sense of freedom that came along with it.

"I like being able to not be taken by the hand to every event," said the Lake-Lehman junior high school student from Shavertown. "You get to do your

own thing."

Students from 52 schools from throughout northeastern Pennsylvania got to experience that same sense of freedom at the 2012 Regional Science Olympiad competition at the Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus March 7.

More than 750 students, including students from Lake-Lehman and Dallas middle and high schools, competed in contests such as "Compute This," "Microbe Mission," "Keep the Heat" and others.

MacMullen was most interested in the "Keep the Heat" competition because he and his teammates spent quite a bit of time preparing.

The object of the experiment is to devise a way to keep a beaker of warm water insulated. It's tested by keeping track of the water's temperature over a period of time.

The Lake-Lehman junior high team created a cube and stuffed it with wool. Team members also created a stand for the beaker

to keep it surrounded by the soft fibers.

"It kept the beaker snug and the wool was compacted around it, which kept the water heated," said 12-year-old Marina Malcolm, of Shavertown.

Malcolm joined Science Olympiad because it enabled her to meet new people while exploring a subject she finds interesting.

"I like science because just the

See OLYMPIAD, Page 12



BILL TARUTIS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Five-year-old Lion Cub Scout Joshua Vieczorek of Noxen rides his 'horse' at the Cub Scout Pack 232 Pinewood Derby.

Gaming grants make their way to Back Mtn.

By SARAH HITE
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Two municipalities in the Back Mountain were awarded grant money Tuesday from gaming fund revenues for projects that will benefit the entire community.

One of the big-ticket items to receive funding is the Back Mountain Community Partnership's plans for a regional emergency management center - \$975,000 was allocated toward the project.

Vice Chairman John Wilkes Jr. said the project wouldn't have been able to get off the ground without any financial support, though the group initially requested about \$1,229,000.

"We're absolutely tickled with the generosity we did get," he said. "Without the amount of money we did receive, it wasn't going to go anywhere."

The center is planned to be located at a former medical building off Route 118 in Lehman Township. Dallas Fire & Ambulance Inc. purchased the building in 2010 with the hopes of eventually building a similar center. The project also includes the construction of a pole building on the 9-acre property.

The space will be used for equipment and medical supply storage, partnership and other civic organization meetings, emergency responder training, sleeping quarters for evacuees and a control center for the Back Mountain Regional Emer-

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Vice chairman, Back Mountain Community Partnership

gency Management Agency.

Mark Van Etten, president of Dallas Fire & Ambulance Inc., said the project is the first he knows of in terms of regional emergency cooperation.

"Back Mountain communities are willing to be able to enhance their emergency response and services to Back Mountain residents at no additional cost to taxpayers on a joint regional basis," he said. "This is a great day for the Back Mountain and its residents."

Wilkes said the facility and supplies will also be available to neighboring municipalities in

See GAMING, Page 12



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