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Facility plans progress

Partnership confirms plans to move facility forward despite cuts in budget.

By SARAH HITE
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Plans for a regional emergency management facility are moving forward despite budget cuts, the Back Mountain Community Partnership confirmed at a meeting May 17.

Lehman Township received a \$975,000 gaming fund grant on behalf of the partnership in March for a regional emergency management agency facility to be located in a former medical building off Route 118.

The partnership initially requested \$1.2 million for the project. Cuts were made to administrative fees, engineering, permitting and legal fees and new construction costs.

A committee of partnership members met with emergency management agency officials to discuss the budget and the group agreed to increase the amount of equipment located at the site. This includes having two trailers packed with equipment to increase efficiency during emergency situations.

Another major change to the project includes the elimination of a pole barn in favor of building an addition to the existing building. Chairman James Reino Jr. said the measure saves money, increases security and will make the site more efficient.

The partnership also named Quad III Engineering as the project engineer and architect.

In other news ...

Kingston Township Supervisor Jeffrey Box asked the partnership to collectively urge state officials to move forward with a corridor study requested nearly 10 years ago on state routes 309 and 415.

Box said Kingston Township received a draft of the study a few years ago, but it was never finalized by the state Department of Transportation. He said the study would be a key factor in scheduling the roads on PennDOT's Transportation Improvement Program project list.

Partnership members also discussed funding of the 2012-13 DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program in the Dallas School District.

Kingston Township Manager Kathleen Sebastian said the rates would stay close to last year's for participating municipalities, though funding would need to be approved by August for Kingston Township DARE officer Frank Ziegler to receive updated training for the program's new curriculum.

Last year, the rates were dispersed so the school district contributed 35 percent, Kingston and Dallas townships contributed 20 percent each and Dallas Borough and Franklin Township both contributed 12.5 percent.

Sebastian said the totals for

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IT'S PROM TIME



Senior Kaleb Taylor, left, and sophomore Alex Klinges enjoy the Dallas High School prom.



Lake-Lehman junior Ashlee Barker, left, and senior Zack Titus arrive at the Genetti Hotel & Conference Center in Wilkes-Barre.

It's prom season and students from both Dallas and Lake-Lehman High Schools enjoyed theirs this past week. For additional photos, please turn to pages 5 and 7.

Group vows to protect graves

By MARK GUYDISH
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Standing near a proposed hiking/bicycling trail route that would wend its way between several tombstones in the Sacred Heart Cemetery off Dorchester Drive in Dallas, Mary Jean Tarantini urged families who have plots on the property to contact Diocese of Scranton officials and request the trail be rerouted away from "this sacred place."

"We are very concerned and shocked that this has been planned for eight years and not one plot owner knew about it" until recently, said Tarantini, of Harveys Lake.

Tarantini was joined by more than 30 people collectively call-

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Poultry presentation is an egg-citing one

Backyard chickens easy to care for, do wonders for health and environment.

By SARAH HITE
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Poultry fans found a recent presentation at The Lands at Hillside Farms very egg-citing.

Dr. Doug Ayers, a veterinarian at the Plains Animal Hospital in Plains Township and chairman of the farm's board of directors, told a small group of chicken enthusiasts in the farm's Coach Barn on May 19 that it's easy to keep hens in a backyard, and it'll do wonders for people's health and the environment, too.

Chris Mathers, of Kingston Township, attended the talk just a few weeks after asking the Kingston Township Board of Supervisors if it would change the township zoning ordinance to allow her to raise chickens on her property.

Mathers, whose husband Gary is a supervisor, lives in a residential area and zoning laws currently prohibit the keeping of farm animals in such areas. Land zoned agricultural could house hens and other farm animals.

Mathers believes the benefits of raising chickens outweigh any fault the supervisors could find.

"There are so many benefits," she said. "You don't need a rooster, they eat bugs and ticks and their eggs are high in nutritional value."

Mathers wants to raise chickens to become more self-reliant. She already tends a garden and said raising chickens is the next natural step.

"With this economy, if there was a disruption in transportation or a natural disaster, we have to be more self-reliant just in case," she said.

Ayers told the group that keeping chickens is definitely a step up from store-bought eggs.



Veterinarian Dr. Doug Ayers interacts with a hen at The Lands at Hillside Farms prior to a presentation on how to raise chickens in your backyard.

"In cracking the eggs, you can see the difference in quality," he said, holding an egg from a Hillside chicken. "I need a hammer to crack this egg."

Ayers, who was raised in Wilkes-Barre and on a farm in Noxen, said all chickens have Salmonella in their bodies, and it's released by stress. He said

chickens kept at an industrial farm are so stressed the chickens "release it all the time."

Ayers believes this debunks the myth that home-raised chickens are less healthy.

"People have it backwards," he said.

But Ayers warned those in attendance that chickens can't be raised alone - the creatures

are naturally sociable and tend to flock together.

The Humko family is well-ahead of the curve - the family tends about 30 chickens on its Harding property.

Gail Humko decided to raise chickens last year because she felt the eggs would be healthier and cheaper to produce.

"They're fun to watch, too,"

she said.

Chickens came to Humko by accident - a third-grade science project at Wyoming Area left her with a few chicks at home so she decided to keep the peeps and make them part of her family.

Ayers said keeping chickens

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