

AUGUST/NEWS

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knocked the Toughman Contest off the county fair event list.

The county's decision to cancel the Toughman Contest, a fair staple for 14 years, capped a whirlwind on-again, off-again two days that featured legal battles ranging from Cheboygan to Ingham County and back.

County board Chairman Herb Makima announced the Toughman cancellation Thursday evening, overruling the fair board and disappointing fighters and those who came to gawk at the amateur bouts.

"We're following the advice of our legal counsel," Makima said.

County lawyers told the board it could be held criminally liable if the event occurred, Makima said.

AUG. 9

Junkyard is shut down

BELLAIRE — State regulators have ordered the owner of a junkyard off M-88 in Antrim County's Custer Township to cease operations until his business is properly licensed.

Officials with the Department of State's automotive complaint resolution division recently told Jim Swain "to quit crushing cars, and quit selling parts; that they didn't have a license," said Custer Supervisor Robert Ricksgers.

Additionally, state Department of Environmental Quality officials inspected the site and noted several alleged violations.

DEQ inspectors plan another inspection of the 80-acre salvage yard soon, to better quantify any violations, Roycraft said. The inspectors will then discuss with DEQ Lansing officials an appropriate course of action, he said.

AUG. 10

Car-free freeway a hit

MANTON — Three hundred walkers, runners, skaters, cyclists and horseback riders

got a preview Saturday morning of part of the Manton bypass that extends the U.S. 131 freeway north from the Cadillac area to just south of the Manistee River.

The 11-mile, \$39 million project is expected to be completed in early fall. It will shave a few minutes for travelers using the U.S. 131 route while easing truck and other through traffic through Manton. The work is ahead of schedule by about nine months, said state highway officials.

AUG. 11

Entry denied at park?

FRANKFORT — A group of residents here is concerned that access to 30,000 acres of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is in jeopardy.

Because the areas are a proposed wilderness, Citizens for Access to the Lakeshore say a number of people might not be able to visit them in the future.

About 7,000 acres of the park were proposed as a wilderness with an additional 23,000 acres as potential wilderness in 1981. Last year, however, when the Park Service unveiled four different alternative proposals for public discussion, opposition was so great that the U.S. Department of Interior announced in October that work on the plan was being halted.

Park officials say access will continue to be maintained to proposed wilderness areas listed in some of the alternatives — on the Manitou Islands, near Platte River, Good Harbor Bay and Pyramid Point.

AUG. 12

State OKs designations

CADILLAC — State officials have recommended that the Upper Manistee and Pine rivers be covered under the Natural Rivers Act, but with a few changes to soothe concerned homeowners, campers and anglers.

Public comment favoring the designation outweighed opposition, 72 percent to 28

percent, according to a Department of Natural Resources report.

The report — prepared by Steve Sutton of the DNR's fisheries division — advocates five rule changes from previous drafts regarding both rivers and two additional changes relating only to the Upper Manistee.

AUG. 13

Clous may go to trial

CADILLAC — Developer Bill Clous may be plowing toward a settlement with state officials over alleged environmental violations at an East Bay Township property, but his trouble with Grand Traverse County is far from over.

"That looks like where we're heading, right to the courtroom," said Grand Traverse Prosecutor Dennis LaBelle, as he walked out of a settlement conference with Clous and officials from the Department of Environmental Quality on Tuesday.

LaBelle has charged Clous with willfully violating soil erosion control laws for not applying for a permit with the county's drain commission. The maximum penalty is a fine of up to \$10,000 per day of violation.

The DEQ case against Clous involves alleged wetlands violations.

LaBelle said he saw no use staying at the meeting, which was a settlement conference between Clous and officials from the DEQ and the county, because he believed no progress was being made.

LaBelle said he could not discuss details of the meeting, due to court rules on settlement cases.

AUG. 14

Graceland to be charged

FRANKFORT — Environmental problems for Graceland Fruit Cooperative, Inc. didn't begin when blueberry juice from its Frankfort processing plant ended up in a gravel pit near Beulah.

It's been more than a decade since the company

that bills itself as the world's largest producer of dried sweet fruit products had a state permit to discharge liquid waste.

Long-standing liquid waste permitting problems, combined with improper dumping of blueberry juice waste discovered in February, could lead to civil and criminal sanctions against the company.

A May 27 DEQ letter to the company obtained by the Record-Eagle outlines allegations of negligence in the blueberry juice incident. A second set of violations stems from its previous failure to obtain a wastewater discharge permit.

Don Nugent, Graceland president, contends the company is innocent in the blueberry incident and that it has spent more than \$1 million since 1992 trying to resolve the permit issue.

AUG. 15

EPA cleans up oil at site

GRAWN — Federal environmental cleanup crews began removing tons of oil-saturated dirt and 20,000 gallons of oil Thursday from a former tire dump that caught fire in late 1995 and burned for 23 days.

The cleanup at the Superfund site, once the home of Carl's Tire Retreading at 5715 Sawyer Woods Drive, will cost an estimated \$1.5 million.

It complements an ongoing \$4 million state cleanup on the four-acre parcel used as a tire disposal and transfer facility in the 1980s and 1990s.

The EPA cleanup is expected to be completed by mid-November.

AUG. 16

Region dodges blackout

TRAVERSE CITY — Northwest Lower Michigan dodged a bullet when blackouts hit much of the power grid in southeast Michigan, northeast United States, eastern Canada and northern Ohio.

But managers of major power groups serving the

region are still skittish enough that they want customers to trim power usage over the weekend.

The power outage spurred an exodus of cars heading north on Interstate 75.

Lodging operators braced for an extra large flood of visitors this weekend.

The area was largely booked up by mid-Friday.

AUG. 17

Reunion at powwow

PESHAWBESTOWN — The dancers in the annual powwow here wove their way around the center circle taking the same traditional steps their ancestors have taken for centuries.

For members of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the weekend event is a chance to honor their heritage and reunite with family and friends.

The camaraderie of custom and culture was shared by several thousand who came to the powwow from throughout Michigan, said Steve Feringa, chairman of the organizational committee.

Always held during the third week in August, Feringa said many families plan to meet up at the powwow for reunions.

It is also a time to remember history and to share that tradition with young children. Throughout the three-day event, the young and the old eat, dance and play together.

AUG. 18

Land-use findings ready

TRAVERSE CITY — Suggestions for better land use from the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council are expected to be released today after the council's report was delayed by last week's power blackout in lower Michigan.

The recommendations from a bipartisan panel appointed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm are the product of hearings held across the state and will address urban sprawl, farm-