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South Airport Road plant were told Wednesday that the plant will close by next July.

Lear management was unavailable for comment, but a United Auto Workers official reached late Wednesday confirmed the closing.

Rob Naugle, UAW international representative and business agent for the union's Region 1-D, said John Fowler, Lear's director of labor relations, told employees the company must downsize because it has too much capacity and too few orders.

There currently are 270 hourly and about 130 salary employees at the plant. As recently as 1999, it employed about 900.

A second Lear plant on Woodmere Street employs about 200 but is not affected by the South Airport Road plant closing, Naugle said.

The closing will be accomplished in phases beginning in March, when the first of three production lines will be removed.

OCT. 17

Prosecutor being probed

BEULAH — Benzie County's prosecutor is being investigated by the state attorney general's office, but those with knowledge of the probe aren't talking.

The complaint against Anthony Cicchelli stems from an investigation conducted by the Frankfort Police Department, Isaacs said, which forwarded the case to the state in February.

Cicchelli, a Frankfort resident, was elected county prosecutor in 1996 and again in 2000.

Cicchelli said he was aware of an investigation but would not discuss the details except to say he thought it had ended.

OCT. 18

Man missing; foul play?

PETOSKEY — An Alanson man has been missing for more than a week, and police have deemed the disappearance suspicious.

Richard Allen Armbruster, 42, was last seen at the Pinehurst Bar in Indian River the evening of Oct. 10. He's since not shown up for work and failed to pick up his children as scheduled last Saturday.

Police established a five-department task force to investigate Armbruster's disappearance, including the Emmet and Cheboygan county sheriff's departments, the Michigan State Police posts in Petoskey and Cheboygan, and the Tuscarora Township Police Department.

OCT. 19

Diversity panel named

CHEBOYGAN — Cheboygan officials appointed seven local people to a board designed to forge better relationships among diverse members of the community.

Federal officials required such a panel while brokering a dispute over alleged treatment by some in the community toward members of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Mackinaw.

Two Coast Guard staffers filed discrimination complaints against Cheboygan businesses during the past year, prompting intervention by the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service.

OCT. 20

Retiree insurance at risk

TRAVERSE CITY — Scores of retired Grand Traverse County workers are facing hundreds of dollars in extra monthly health care costs, thanks to the county board.

The county notified more than 60 former employees that commissioners are eliminating a supplemental insurance program that's been in place for retirees for more than 20 years.

The benefit is a supplement or "wrap" program that fills in the gaps in Medicare coverage once retirees reach age 65.

Up to now, the county had fully paid the cost of that supplemental coverage. Now the \$300-plus monthly coverage

costs will be shifted to retirees.

Commissioners decided to eliminate the insurance rider, effective April 1, among steps to trim more than \$3 million from next year's \$33 million general fund budget.

OCT. 21

Opera House gets tax OK

TRAVERSE CITY — The restoration of the City Opera House will get a \$1.5 million boost in the form of historic tax credits through a lease agreement approved by the city commission Monday night.

The commission unanimously approved a long-term lease agreement developed by the City Opera House Heritage Association to access state and federal tax credits for the ongoing renovations and restoration of the 1891 downtown landmark. The idea was brought up earlier this year as a way to revive fund-raising efforts for the \$8.5 million project.

OCT. 22

Benzie grandmother slain

HONOR — Police believe a parolee robbed and killed his 78-year-old grandmother in her small Benzie County home.

Lillian Mae Ross, 78, who lived alone off a dirt road in a neatly kept trailer home in Homestead Township, was shot in the neck, Sheriff Bob Blank said.

Police are looking for her grandson, John Thomas Robertson, 31, and his companion, Robert David Eckstein, 23, both of Flint. Both men were released from prison in the past year.

Murder warrants were issued Tuesday for Robertson and Eckstein by Prosecutor Anthony Cicchelli, Blank said.

OCT. 23

Missing car found

BEULAH — A man wanted in the shooting death of his grandmother turned to her in recent days for a place to stay, but the relationship

soured and he left under strained circumstances, authorities said.

But John Thomas Robertson allegedly returned to Lillian Mae Ross' Homestead Township residence late this weekend with robbery on his mind, Benzie County Sheriff Robert Blank said.

Police continue to search for Robertson, 31, and an alleged accomplice, Robert David Eckstein, 23. A vehicle the pair allegedly took from Ross' home was found abandoned Tuesday in Alorton, Ill., near East St. Louis. Police said the pair may be headed to Oklahoma or New Mexico in a black Ford Mustang.

Authorities said the suspects allegedly broke into Ross' home late Sunday or early Monday and robbed her before shooting her in the neck.

The Flint men have lengthy criminal records and were released from Michigan prisons within the past year.

OCT. 24

Family to live in Guyana

TRAVERSE CITY — Jay and Maureen Berger don't know much about the South American country of Guyana, but they're about to have a baptism by fire.

The Traverse City couple and their three children — Ben, 17; Luke, 14; and Emma, 12 — will spend two weeks roughing it in a rural village as part of the National Geographic Channel's "Worlds Apart" television series. The program, which takes different American families to live in remote places to experience the cultures firsthand, airs Mondays at 8 p.m.

Berger said his wife, a stained glass artist, applied to "Worlds Apart" in April after watching a segment about the show on "Oprah." The Bergers learned a week ago that they had been selected, and found out Tuesday night where they will go.

A National Geographic team arrived in Traverse City Wednesday to film at the

Bergers' house and to advise the family on what they need to take.

OCT. 25

Slaying suspects arrested

HONOR — Police in New Mexico and Oklahoma on Friday arrested two men and a woman wanted in the slaying of a 78-year-old Honor woman.

Few details were available late Friday, but authorities said John Thomas Robertson, 31, grandson of victim Lillian Mae Ross, was arrested about 12:30 p.m. EDT in Guthrie, N.M., while in possession of a stolen vehicle.

A woman was arrested with Robertson as an accomplice in the slaying, but authorities did not release her name. Benzie County Sheriff's Detective Troy Lamerson said the woman is believed to have lived in this area within the last couple of years.

Robert David Eckstein, 23, was arrested by FBI agents Friday at 7:40 p.m. EDT at a residence in Oklahoma.

OCT. 26

Body found at area resort

ARCADIA — A Detroit-area woman was found dead on the shore of Herring Lake Saturday morning in what police are calling a suspicious death.

By Saturday afternoon, police had not determined how Florence Unger, 37, of Huntington Woods, died.

State and county officers continued to investigate the scene where she was found throughout the day. Two investigators wore white suits with hoods, but police declined to say what the suits were for.

Unger and her family were guests at the Watervale Inn, a Victorian-style resort on the shore of Herring Lake, said Jennie Schmitt, whose family owns the resort.

Police had taped off a section of shoreline including a boathouse at the east end of a row of cottages that are part of Watervale.

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