

## DECEMBER/NEWS

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## DEC. 19

**Consumers can't cut yet**

MANISTEE — Consumers Energy and opponents of the company's tree-cutting plan in Onekama will meet again in court Feb. 13.

Circuit Judge James Batzer on Thursday upheld a temporary restraining order against a plan to cut or trim hundreds of village trees.

Consumers Energy says the trees have grown too close to electrical lines, increasing the chances of power outages.

But residents who oppose the plan say the "urban forest" should be preserved with a cutting plan developed with help from Copemish tree expert David Milarch.

Consumers crews will not be able to cut trees prior to the hearing.

## DEC. 20

**Vaccine supplies dry up**

TRAVERSE CITY — Local health officials who usually dispose of excess flu vaccines at this time of year are out and waiting for more.

"In other years, we worried about wasting vaccine by not using it all — that won't be the case this year," said Fred Keeslar, director of the Grand Traverse County Health Department.

His office has distributed 3,000 doses of the vaccine through the department to local clinics and to doctors' offices.

The county health department and several area clinics say they're out of the adult flu vaccine. Keeslar said some doses are still available locally for infants and children and some pharmacies also have the "flu mist" spray vaccine, designed to be inhaled.

Adult vaccines are in short supply, but health officials said they aren't worried the flu bug will be more prevalent as a result.

## DEC. 21

**Mt. Holiday returns**

EAST BAY TOWNSHIP —

Area skiers will get an early Christmas present from the nonprofit group that rescued Mt. Holiday.

First developed in 1949 by local businessmen who wanted to create an affordable ski area for families in the Grand Traverse area, Mt. Holiday slowly grew to its present 12 runs.

Generations of local young people learned to ski and honed their skills there. But Mt. Holiday failed to reopen for the 2001-2002 ski season following the death of former owner Warren Brosch, who died in 1999 in an accident while working on the slopes.

Mt. Holiday Inc., the citizens group formed late last year, raised more than \$1.2 million to buy the ski hill, renovate the lodge and purchase new equipment. The group will operate the popular ski hill and eventually plans to turn it into a year-round recreational facility.

## DEC. 22

**County seeks bridge input**

TRAVERSE CITY — County road officials will try a new approach to pursue their stalled Hartman-Hammond bridge project.

The Grand Traverse County Road Commission last week formally withdrew a state wetland construction permit application for the proposed connector bridge over the Boardman River.

Those plans were blocked by ongoing opposition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency because of the project's impact on the river valley and the wetland areas there.

Mike Dillenbeck, road commission manager, said another bridge proposal won't be submitted to the state Department of Environmental Quality until county representatives confer with state and federal regulators for "specific guidance" on developing an acceptable bridge design plan.

Bridge opponents supported the county's latest move in the long-pending bridge bat-



Record-Eagle file photo/John L. Russell

**Demonstrators protest the killing of deer at Cherry Capital.**

tle — but suspect road officials may not welcome the advice they get from the state and federal regulators.

## DEC. 23

**Bovine TB tests wrap up**

TRAVERSE CITY — A three-year campaign to test every cow in Michigan for bovine tuberculosis is winding down, a milestone in the fight against the disease that has bedeviled the state's cattle industry since the late 1990s.

Farmers and state officials hope the testing will move Michigan a step closer to regaining the federal TB-free designation it lost in 2000, which crippled the export of Michigan cattle outside the state.

Complete figures aren't available on how big a hit the state economy has taken. But a Michigan State University study this year estimated tourism spending in the northeastern Lower Peninsula, where the disease is concentrated, has fallen about \$25 million annually — mostly because of a hunting drop-off.

State government has spent \$47 million fighting bovine TB, including \$15 million on livestock testing.

## DEC. 24

**Dobson to buy NPI**

TRAVERSE CITY — About 40,000 NPI Wireless phone subscribers in northern Michigan will see a change in

company ownership after Dobson Communications Corp. buys NPI for about \$28 million next year.

Dobson announced the deal to buy the assets of NPI-Omnipoint Wireless LLC Tuesday. It is set to close in the second quarter of 2004.

NPI, based in Traverse City, has 80 employees. Dobson treasurer Richard Sewell said all will be interviewed but not all will be re-hired.

## DEC. 25

**TART to groom trail**

ACME — Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails (TART Trails) will continue to groom the Vasa Pathway for cross-country skiers this winter despite a lack of funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Traditionally, the TART Trails grooming team grooms the trail all winter and then submits their grooming efforts to the DNR to be partially reimbursed by the state.

This year the state is not funding any cross-country skiing activities. TART said it will lose \$6,000-\$8,000 in revenue. The trail grooming program will be funded entirely by donations to TART Trails.

The trail is managed under agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Grand Traverse County, and TART Trails,

and is located in the Pere Marquette State Forest.

## DEC. 26

**Goodwill Inn offers help**

TRAVERSE CITY — Mike Zubak didn't want much for Christmas.

All he hoped for was something most people take for granted.

"I just want to be self-sufficient," the 47-year-old said Thursday. "To have a little piece of the pie."

As Zubak rises from his bed each morning at Traverse City's Goodwill Inn, he's struck by the crushing reality of his life — homeless, jobless, disabled and on probation.

But he felt a bit reassured on a lonely Christmas morning when he walked into the shelter's kitchen and found a group of volunteers making breakfast.

"It was quite startling to see all the love and concern from strangers," he said.

Zubak has often had to rely on strangers since July, when he arrived at the Goodwill Inn.

The 52-bed facility provides emergency food and shelter, housing and job placement, as well as vocational training to people in similar, difficult circumstances.

Last year alone, it provided 17,378 nights of shelter to 354 adults and 82 children.

## DEC. 27

**Snow into river an error**

TRAVERSE CITY — Motorists may have spotted snow being blown into the Boardman River by a city public services employee early Friday.

Because of contaminants in the snow, like sand, salt and auto exhaust that blackens the powder, that's not supposed to happen, said DPS director Bob Cole.

"Snow is not clean enough, any snow that's had contact with the ground," Cole said. "In the old days, I guess they used to dump all of the snow into the Boardman."

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