

BOMBERS ARE STATE CHAMPS!

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CLOQUET SCHOOL BOARD

School board cuts jobs, tables elementary schools discussion

Brittany Berrens
Pine Journal

The weather outside was warm and bright, but Monday night's Cloquet School Board meeting was anything but. Board members unanimously voted to terminate a total of 17 contracts and positions in light of potential budget short-falls.

Many of the cuts are being made by not filling positions after employees retire.

The terminations, which equate to seven full-time positions and 10 part-time positions, were made in response to the likely drop in educational revenues due to Minnesota's dismal budget. The next biennium projections show state deficits of \$5-8 billion.

In a report given to the board members from Superintendent Ken Scarbrough, this year's budget is expected to produce a nearly \$800,000 deficit, and next year looks to be far worse with an estimated deficit up to \$1.5 million.

Contributing to this deficit is the potential loss of \$250,000 a year if a current referendum is not renewed this fall.

While this may seem like a large deficit, the district still has an estimated \$4 million in unreserved funds.

"I still feel like with that \$4 million fund balance, if they come in and reduce aid, we can still weather the storm and make sure we don't end up in statutory operating debt the next year," said Scarbrough. "But that will mean we will have to look at more reductions that spring."

Scarbrough said programs are safe from cuts at this time, but may not be able to dodge the bullet in the coming years.

Also in light of a bleak budget outlook, board members

voted to postpone the motion to consider the restructuring plan proposed by Scarbrough in the previous board meeting.

"It just seems too expensive at this time to even look into it, although I really think it's the way to go," said board member Sandy Crowley.

The proposal was to group kindergarten through second-grade classes at one elementary school and third- through fifth-grade classes at the other.

Scarbrough suggested it would make staffing and student enrollment issues more efficient and would demote any sense of competition between Washington and Churchill elementary schools. He also recognized it could be a pricy plan to implement.

Board Member Jim Crowley reiterated Sandy Crowley's feelings about the decision.

"The way the budget looks, it's going to take a lot of money to reconfigure things," he said. "[The plan] makes pure sense from an academic point. I'd like the dialogue to continue, but maybe not as anything official."

On another note, Cloquet High School Principal Warren Peterson reported that students in the Light at the End of the Tunnel (L.E.T.) program, which serves students at risk of not graduating, have released a 1920s-style newspaper. The Pine Needle features news articles, photos and comics from March 17, 1927.

The group of students, along with volunteers, spent nearly three months researching, writing and designing the newspaper.

"It's a lot of hard work, and some of them might want to back out or quit, but they realize

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County willing to pay the price for volunteers

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Carlton County commissioners voted unanimously on Tuesday to help reimburse volunteers who drive elderly or disabled Medicaid clients to and from medical appointments.

Carlton County Financial Assistance Supervisor Jan Rabideaux explained to commissioners that counties are required to administer Access Transportation Services (ATS) to those clients who are unable to drive themselves.

She said Carlton County currently accesses volunteer drivers for that purpose through the Human Development Center in Cloquet and Volunteer Services of Carlton County.

Up until now, Rabideaux pointed out, reimbursements to volunteer drivers have been made at the IRS rate, currently 50 cents per mile, for all miles driven by volunteers — both when the client is in the vehicle on the way to and from an appointment as well as the miles the volunteer incurs while on the way to and from pick-up.

She said though the amount paid to volunteer drivers has traditionally been considered a reimbursable ATS expense, counties recently received a clarification stating that federal regulations do not allow for the reimbursement of the "unloaded" miles through federal funding.

"The issue of not being able to claim reimbursement for the unloaded miles is of great concern to counties throughout the state," said Rabideaux, "and in particular, greater Minnesota, where volunteers have to drive significant miles just to pick up clients."

She informed commissioners that several counties in the region

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Barnum Bombers Leah Nordvall (25), Sarah Myhre (23) and Katrina Newman raise the Class A championship trophy in triumph after winning the title game Saturday. The ever-supportive Barnum community was out in full force at the Target Center (right) to support their Bombers. The win marked the first state basketball title for any Northland school in 26 years.

Paul Gregersen/Pine Journal



Scanlon burning to join Cloquet Area Fire District

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Scanlon officials came to the table last week to engage in talks that could result in their volunteer fire department joining the recently created Cloquet Area Fire District.

"We are about as committed as we could be for one meeting," said Scanlon Mayor Jim Putnam last week.

The meeting involved members of the Cloquet Area Fire District Board, Scanlon and Cloquet city officials and Scanlon volunteer firefighters.

"We see things here that could be of immediate benefit even before we have a formal agreement," Putnam said.

The main goal for Scanlon is to have quicker response times with fire calls, which is difficult currently because the majority, if not all, of the volunteer firefighting force have day jobs outside of town.

"I see our number one benefit as response on daytime calls," Putnam said.

"We don't have too many fires in general, but all it takes is one or two."

Ideally, Scanlon would like to work with the CAFD to put an automatic aid agreement in place immediately that would have CAFD firefighters respond to any fire calls in Scanlon. Right now, they have a mutual aid agreement in which CAFD will respond, but only after Scanlon firefighters request them to do so.

This could serve as the first step toward joining the CAFD, although that process will take months and perhaps a few years before the entities are fully and successfully merged.

Their tentative goal is to have a joint powers agreement in effect by January 2011 with member status by January 2012.

"It was a very productive meeting and we look forward to the continuing work in this process," CAFD Chief Jim Langenbrunner said after the meeting.

The CAFD is the result of Cloquet and Perch Lake Township consolidating after

years of talks, which initially included departments from Thomson Township, Wrenshall, Scanlon, Carlton and the Fond du Lac Reservation, among others. Talks to consolidate area fire departments began in 2003 after Cloquet's local government aid was cut significantly. In 2005, Carlton County officials hired an outside consulting firm to evaluate fire and ambulance services in the area and consolidation was one of the major recommendations.

Today, a CAFD board made up of five people oversees operations of the 21 full-time and approximately 15 paid on-call members who now respond together to emergencies in 71 square miles throughout northeastern Carlton County and parts of southern St. Louis County. Perch Lake Township is west of Cloquet and covers much of the Big Lake area.

The district is now its own taxing authority through the state legislature and can set

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Fri 50/31
3/26



Sat 46/30
3/27



Sun 43/26
3/28



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CLASS A STATE GIRLS BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

State Champions!

Jeff Papas
Pine Journal

For the last four seasons, the Barnum girls basketball team has been making a four-course dinner. Saturday in Minneapolis, they finally got to eat the dessert.

The Bombers beat Goodhue 43-31 to claim the Minnesota Class A championship—the first state basketball title for any Northland school in 26 years—

and in the process, cleared the ultimate hurdle.

“These kids have accomplished so much, they have done so much, they have achieved so much,” coach Randy Myhre said.

The Bombers have definitely “done so much” with a 120-6 record over the last four years. However, three of those losses came in consecutive state tournaments, leading to a runner-up finish and two third-place fin-

ishes. Saturday, however, the team grabbed the brass ring.

The team, as you might expect in such a setting, was full of heroes, but perhaps the greatest hero of all scored just 12 points in the entire tournament.

Guard Leah Nordvall finished a wonderful tournament by receiving the state tournament game ball from her teammates.

“She played phenomenal defense,” Myhre said. “She was

our point defender, and she was everywhere.”

In the quarterfinals, Barnum stopped first-time tournament entry Nashauk-Keewatin 55-23 and left little doubt as to the outcome. The Bombers scored nine of the first 11 points and raced off to a 25-6 lead with 2:13 left in the first half.

Barnum’s pressure defense, led by Nordvall, held N-K to

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Barnum junior Jessica Newman threads her way through Goodhue defenders in the Class A state championship game at the Target Center Saturday. Newman scored 19 points against the Wildcats en route to a 43-31 victory. The 2010 Barnum Bombers, known for their tenacious defense and skilled offensive attack, came home with the state title. Paul Gregersen/Pine Journal



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COLLEGE SOFTBALL

This year's challenge: A new, young roster

Thunder defeats Northland Community College

Tyler Korby
Pine Journal

A year ago, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College softball head coach Kerry Rodd had the luxury of fielding one of the best squads in the country.

But this spring, things will be a little different for the Thunder. Having lost 10 players from last season, including five All-Conference players and one All-American, FDLTCC will be sporting a new look on the diamond.

This year's crew features 11 freshmen.

“We’ve got a whole new team out here,” said Rodd. “But I think we’re a well-kept secret. Losing what we did, I think we’ll surprise some people this year.”

The Thunder began their 2010 schedule last week at the Minnesota Classic Tournament, where in the two-day event, they went 2-5-1 in eight games played at the Rosemount Dome.

FDLTCC went winless last Tuesday, yet posted a pair of victories last Wednesday. They drubbed Northland Community and Technical College 12-2, and followed it with a late-inning 4-3 win against Vermilion Community College.

“It was tough,” said Rodd, who along with his team, had to leave at 3:30 a.m. both days to get to Rosemount, Minn. “We knew it wasn’t going to be easy because of all our youth. The first two games, the girls were so wide-eyed and nervous, we just couldn’t do anything.”

But as the tournament progressed, Rodd noticed major strides. “The girls finally relaxed a bit, just played the game and we had success,” he said. “We got better each game we played.”

The Thunder was paced by their sophomore captain, Megan Johnson, as the centerfielder from Esko led the squad with a stellar .421 batting average. Along with Johnson, this spring’s captains are returning sophomores Steph Engelmeier and Jenny Wannemacher.

Rodd also mentioned the solid play by a pair of his freshmen in Moose Lake-Willow River native Amanda Larson and Rush City native Jade Kristofferson. The first baseman Kristofferson hit .333, while shortstop Larson did the same and added a solo

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YOUTH HOCKEY

Cloquet Bantam As reach state consolation final

Jeff Papas
Pine Journal

Cloquet’s Bantam A hockey team suffered a couple of cruel blows at last week’s Bantam A state tournament—but still reached the consolation finals in the eight-team event.

The opening game was against top-ranked Woodbury on Thursday, and Cloquet led 3-1 late in the second period before their opponents charged back into the game.

“[Woodbury was] rated No. 1 or 2 in the state all season long but we had them 3-1 late in the second period,” coach Brian Michaud said. “They got a late goal before the break, tied it with seven minutes left in the third period on a power play, and got a winner with two and a half minutes left.”

Cloquet got in penalty trouble in the third period, taking three straight to give Woodbury plenty of power play time. An empty-net goal made the final 5-3.

That put Cloquet into the consolation bracket, where the team beat Elk River 5-2.

“The kids just played very well,” Michaud said. “Everyone came to play and we just wanted to get into that consolation championship.”

Once there, a fate similar to the quarterfinals befell Cloquet against Osseo-Maple Grove. This time, their Twin Cities opponents picked up a go-ahead goal with three and a half minutes to play and hit an empty net for a 4-2 decision.

“It was just a great opportunity.”

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SECTION 7A BOYS BASKETBALL

AlBrook tumbles in Section 7A finals

Tyler Korby
Pine Journal

HIBBING—Having been in just three section final games in the last 50 years, the AlBrook boys basketball team isn’t used to playing under the bright lights.

But on Saturday, the Falcons looked like a well-oiled machine. Mesabi East was just a little bit better.

Outmatched by the Giants’ size, strength and speed, AlBrook saw an early lead slip away as they were defeated by Mesabi East 75-66 in the Section 7A championship before a raucous crowd at Hibbing Memorial Arena.

“These are the games that

you want to be in,” said AlBrook head coach Damien Paulson. “We came up here and battled our butts off. We just didn’t make enough baskets tonight.”

The Falcons scored the first six points on a pair of three-pointers, but scoring 11 of the next 15 points gave Mesabi East their first advantage midway through the opening frame.

The fast-paced contest continued with the Giants taking a 36-32 lead into the locker rooms at recess. Mesabi East then tallied 13 of the first 15 points on the scoreboard to begin the second half, pulling away from AlBrook.

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AlBrook senior Kollen Karppinen (10) takes an off-balance shot against Mesabi East in the Section 7A championship matchup, played Saturday at Hibbing Memorial Arena. Karppinen and his cousin, Bryce (12), each scored 26 points to lead the Falcons in the 75-66 loss.

Tyler Korby/Pine Journal