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Pa. Budget May Affect County Fair Premiums

Fulton County Fair set for Aug. 16-22

By Chanin Rotz-Mountz
STAFF WRITER

Until the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the governor end their wrangling over cuts and tax hikes and give a final nod to the state budget, the future of millions of dollars earmarked for county and community fairs remains unknown. In Fulton County, the uncertainty and possibility of not receiving an annual allotment to offset various expenses is definitely adding a "new and difficult twist" to organizational efforts by the Fulton County Fair Board.

According to Fair Board President Clem Malot, like many other fairs statewide, the Fulton County Fair has received "premium funding" or reimbursement funds for multiple generations to offset a portion of the cost of premiums and ribbons.

"While this does not offset all expenses related just to premiums and ribbons, it has always made it possible for the fair to properly recognize the participants and help offset the tremendous operating expense for the week," said Malot, who added the county routinely receives the state maximum of approximately \$20,000.

"What has probably never been said publicly before is that the Fulton County Fair relies heavily on those funds to operate the week of the fair and otherwise does not make enough money to provide the events and services residents have come to expect," Malot stated. "Even with the efforts of the many unsung volunteers ranging from the Fair Association and the McConnellsburg Fire Co. to the 4-H, FFA programs and the Grease, Steam and Rust Association coupled with the generous support of small businesses countywide, we otherwise just make it from year to year and manage to do a little more each time."

As publicized in several locations within the 2009 fair book, Malot said the fair board may be unable to pay premiums this year. Money collected from daily admission is earmarked to cover year-round operating expenses, such as electricity, sewer, taxes and grass mowing. Admission has remained relatively constant or consistent in recent years, however.

"The value for the cost of admission is a good one," said Malot. "Without the type of support the Department of Agriculture has provided through the premium reimbursement funding and their capital improvement grants, the truth of our age is that our lifestyle in Fulton County is going to be under attack."

"The only way to preserve what we have grown up with and built so many fond memories around is to become more involved in a time when we all have the tendency to become less involved," Malot concluded. "My appreciation and thanks goes out to all event volunteers for the smallest of contributions or kind words that have allowed the Ful-

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DEATHS

Dickinson, Helen, 81, Saltillo
Justice, Hazel, 91, Breezewood
Weicht, Edgar, 79, Crystal Spring

OBITUARIES, Page B3



Chrysler Sign Comes Down



In an unceremonious finale to 45 years as a Chrysler dealership, the sign at Richards Auto Sales was cut up, torn down and removed to the scrap heap Monday. The removal of the Chrysler, Plymouth, Dodge and Jeep sign was overseen by Tom Campbell, a Chrysler official from Knoxville, Tenn., and marks the last visage of any new car dealership in Fulton County. The dealership was one of 789 cut by Chrysler as part of a bankruptcy reorganization plan that went into effect on June 9 of this year. The carmaker just last week emerged from bankruptcy following the court's approval of its plan. Richards Auto Sales remains open as a used car and repair shop business.

JLG To Recall 550-650 Workers

Says callbacks will begin immediately

By Lindsay R. Mellott
STAFF WRITER

After a year of layoff after lay-off at JLG Industries, parent company Oshkosh Corp. announced good news late Tuesday afternoon, saying 550 to 650 workers will be called back to build a billion-dollars' worth of armored vehicles for the U.S. Army.

Oshkosh said in a released statement that it would recall laid-off JLG workers primarily at its Pennsylvania facilities and that between 300 and 500 new hires will be made at its defense facilities in Wisconsin.

The callbacks will begin immediately and will continue in phases aligned with the planned increases in production activities, said Jeff Ford, JLG spokesperson, in a separate statement also released on Tuesday.

Laid-off JLG employees will be contacted by the company according to seniority and job requirements.

"We're certainly pleased with the additional opportunities for our team members," said Craig Paylor, Oshkosh executive vice president and JLG president. "As a member of the Oshkosh Corp. family, the ability to use our manufacturing facilities and our experienced personnel to assist with the Defense contracts will have a very positive effect on our communities which have been adversely affected by the economy."

The announcement comes two weeks after Oshkosh said it had won a \$1.05 billion Department of Defense contract to build 2,244 mine-resistant, ambush-protected all-terrain vehicles (M-ATVs) for ground forces fighting in Afghanistan.

News stories published then said that the vehicle's cabs would be built at JLG's McConnellsburg plant and that hundreds of the company's laid-off employees would be called back to work.

Oshkosh spokesperson Ann Stawski, however, would not confirm those reports last week, telling the "News" that production plans and employment numbers had not been finalized. Those decisions, she said, would be made before the end of July.

Hit hard by the global economic downturn, JLG, beginning last July, has laid off more than half, about 53 percent, of its worldwide workforce, which numbered 4,500 when Oshkosh bought the company in 2006. McConnellsburg JLG workers, which numbered 2,200 in 2006, have been most affected by those layoffs, although Oshkosh has never stated exactly how many workers here have lost jobs.

Layoffs at JLG have skyrocketed Fulton County's unemployment rate into double digits. May's unemployment rate, the most recent, put the county at 13.4 percent, or number 65 out of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

Fulton County commissioners Bonnie Mellott Keefer and David Hoover told the "News" they were "extremely pleased with the positive impact that this (the callbacks) will have on county residents and the community."

Oshkosh's M-ATV was selected by the Army after months of extensive government testing on production-ready vehicles built by the Wisconsin-based truck manufacturer and three other companies that were competing for the contract. Its prototype was chosen because Oshkosh's truck best addressed the Army's need for blast-resistant vehicles that are lighter and agile enough to navigate Afghanistan's harsh terrain.

The 2,244 M-ATVs are to be built by December, with the first shipments scheduled for this month.

To comply with the Pentagon's immediate need for the trucks, Oshkosh hedged its bets and began manufacture of the vehicles last month, ahead of learning it had won the defense



Dan Swain Resigns As Commissioner

To assume chief clerk's role

By Chanin Rotz-Mountz
STAFF WRITER

In an unexpected move late last week, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners announced one commissioner seated on its three-person board would be stepping down in order to fill the shoes of recently retired chief clerk Richard Wible.

Effective Monday, July 13, Daniel Swain Jr. relinquished his duties as county commissioner and stepped into the position of county clerk. Swain, a Republi-

can, has logged more than 13 years with the county in the capacity of commissioner and still has approximately 2-1/2 years of his fourth term of office remaining. Prior to serving as commissioner, Swain spent a three-year stint as planning director and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) coordinator.

"Dan is well aware of the duties and responsibilities of the position of chief clerk," the commissioners stated in their an-



Dan Swain

nouncement to all county employees on July 9. "He brings excellent administrative skills to the position including a deep knowledge of information technology and the experience of having owned and operated his own software development business."

In speaking with the "News," Swain noted even though he has always enjoyed whatever task was in front of him at the time, his years and duties as commis-

sioner have been the most meaningful and enjoyable work that he has ever undertaken.

In 2007, Swain issued a campaign promise he would not seek office retention. In again making reference to his promise, Swain stated, "It was certainly not a lack of interest in county government that caused me to commit to not running again. I have always thoroughly enjoyed the work of commissioner and the opportunity that it provides to do good for our county."

Swain said having the opportunity to work as chief clerk will See SWAIN, Pg. A2

County Growth Higher Than State's

Todd, Thompson and Bethel growing fastest

By Jean Snyder
STAFF WRITER

According to data released by the U.S. Census Bureau last week, Fulton County's population has grown by 5 percent since July 2000, and the numbers make it very clear that the influx has largely been in Todd, Thompson and Bethel townships. All three townships grew more than the county's total percentage of increase.

By contrast, the state of Pennsylvania increased its population by only a little more than 1 percent over the same eight-year time period.

Todd was the leader in population growth, experiencing an 11 percent increase in population from July 1, 2000, through July 1, 2008. Todd was followed by Thompson with a 10 percent growth rate and Bethel with an 8 percent increase.

Belfast and Union townships, with increased populations of 7 and 6 percent, respectively, also increased their populations at a rate higher than the county rate.

With the exception of Todd, municipalities experiencing the greatest rate of growth are in the southern portion of Ful-

ton County, impacting the Southern Fulton School District more than either of the other two county school districts. According to Mary K. Seville, director of Fulton County's planning office, statistics on the number of housing starts in the county are basically consistent with the census estimates. Seville's statistics show that from 2001-2008, there were 315 housing starts in the Southern Fulton School District as opposed to 206 in Central Fulton and 100 in

Forbes Road. There were 621 total county housing starts for the seven-year period.

During that same time period, there were actually more housing starts in Bethel (89) than in any of the other county municipalities. Bethel was followed by Ayr (75), Licking Creek (68), Belfast (66), Todd (63) and Thompson (57). The fewest housing starts were in Wells with only 13.

Seville said, "I'm not surprised that the greatest growth rate is in the southern end of our county." She also speculated that

some of Todd's growth over the past eight years could likely be attributed to housing developments on Brooklyn Drive near McConnellsburg and on Meadow Lane near Knobsville.

Only two municipalities lost population in the eight-year period and both of them are boroughs - the borough of McConnellsburg, with a loss of 3 percent of its population, and Valley-Hi, with a loss of 5 percent (attributable to the decrease of only one person in the

See GROWTH, Pg. A2

Fulton County Municipalities Population Estimates

Municipality	7/1/08	7/1/07	7/1/06	7/1/05	7/1/04	7/1/03	7/1/02	7/1/01	7/1/00	Percentage change from 2000-2008
Fulton Co.	14,935	14,952	14,748	14,579	14,513	14,440	14,281	14,196	14,258	+5%
Ayr	2,059	2,070	2,037	2,007	1,991	2,002	1,991	1,976	1,981	+4%
Belfast	1,428	1,433	1,411	1,368	1,359	1,345	1,322	1,326	1,339	+7%
Bethel	1,539	1,535	1,506	1,481	1,464	1,452	1,440	1,428	1,423	+8%
Brush Creek	730	735	731	730	730	729	726	721	729	<+1%
Dublin	1,299	1,308	1,295	1,281	1,270	1,269	1,268	1,265	1,276	+2%
Licking Creek	1,599	1,604	1,584	1,573	1,567	1,561	1,549	1,537	1,534	+4%
McCbg. Boro	1,040	1,045	1,038	1,037	1,046	1,047	1,052	1,057	1,070	-3%
Taylor	1,268	1,264	1,248	1,242	1,241	1,239	1,236	1,227	1,236	+2.5%
Thompson	1,099	1,098	1,092	1,090	1,089	1,082	1,011	997	999	+10%
Todd	1,649	1,625	1,582	1,563	1,555	1,514	1,495	1,483	1,488	+11%
Union	675	680	672	661	655	650	642	635	635	+6%
Valley-Hi	19	20	19	19	19	20	20	20	20	-5%
Wells	531	535	533	527	527	530	529	524	528	<+1%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

See JLG, Pg. A2