



Geography Club Travels Abroad

Page B8



9-10 Yr. Old All-Stars Win Two Tournaments

Page A6

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WEEKLY

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McCONNELLSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

JULY 30, 2009



Runners break away from the start line of the Ben K-5K Saturday next to Center United Methodist Church. The annual run/walk to honor the late Ben Knepper had almost 200 registered participants and raised over \$5,000 for the scholarship fund.

Ben K-5K Race Draws Big Crowd

Fourth annual event raises over \$5,000 for scholarship fund

By Chanin Rotz-Mountz
STAFF WRITER

They arrived at Center United Methodist Church by bicycle, wagon and even on four fuzzy paws to pay honor and their respects to a Hustontown area man who lost his life four years ago in a traffic accident just miles from his home.

The popular Ben K-5K held Saturday honored the late Ben Knepper, who was as renowned in northern Fulton County and beyond for his quick wit and smile as he was for his love of

family, friends and the great outdoors. Ben died in 2005 on his way from JLG Industries just after a brief rainstorm had swept through the area.

At the time of his death, Ben was six credits short of obtaining a business management degree through the Mont Alto campus of Pennsylvania State University. Recognizing his thirst for knowledge, Ben's family and close friends established the Ben Knepper Scholarship Fund, which is funded annually through the 3.1-mile walk along Dublin Mills Road.



The late Ben Knepper

Almost 200 individuals registered for the July 25 event that included both stiff competition for runners and walkers. According to event organizer G. Joshua Newman, of the official entrants an estimated 45 joined the event as runners.

Ending race results showed several participants walking away with back-to-back and, in two special cases, multiple victories. Cody Myers took the overall male category as well as the male division for ages 18-39 with a time of 19:35. Meanwhile, Steve Novick took top honors in the male 40-and-over division finishing the 5K in 19:36. Eric Broadwater of Waterfall recorded his third consecutive victory in the male 17-and-under category with a time of 20:27.

On the ladies side, Courtney Newman continued her winning streak, clinching her fourth Ben K-5K title and also the 18-39 category with a recorded time of 20:50. Jenna Hollenshead, an up-and-coming track star at Southern Fulton, won the female 17-and-under in 24:33. For the second straight year, Deanne Baker of Needmore garnered a first-place win in the female 40-and-over division. Baker finished the race with a time of 24:58.

Winners received special

See **BEN K-5K**, Pg. A2

FCCMC Forms Community Engagement Committee

NACo grant will provide technical assistance to study local healthcare

By Jean Snyder
STAFF WRITER

Fulton County Medical Center (FCCMC), its administrative staff, board and physicians, assisted by community leaders took the first step last week in evaluating the community's healthcare system and learning more about how it affects the local economy. One of the group's future steps will involve a cross-section of the community in a telephone survey to solicit citizens' opinions on healthcare in the county and surrounding areas.

Funded by a National Association of Counties (NACo) grant, technical assistance will be provided to the community engagement group by NACo and the Oklahoma Center for Rural Health at the Oklahoma State University.

FCCMC's nearly 30-member community engagement group met for the first of four meetings last week to begin the process of examining just how rural healthcare impacts economy with a goal of strengthening that economy through increasing use of local healthcare resources.

The study, only one of several grant projects currently funded in the country, comes at a critical time when unemployment is at 15 percent in Fulton County and also comes on the heels of the opening of a new hospital and construction already under way for a physicians' services annex to the hospital. Combined with the current national debate on healthcare costs, the information taken away from the process will, hopefully, provide FCCMC a perspective on how the hospital can better serve as an economic engine for the area while providing quality services to its citizens.

Last week's meeting was led by Gerald A. Doekson, extension economist at Oklahoma State University (which is home to the National Center for Rural Health Works) and by Val Schott, director of the center. Doekson told team members that during the course of the evaluation process, the grant will provide their technical assistance to: Identify health care needs; examine the social, economic, and political realities affecting the local delivery of healthcare; determine how the healthcare system can best meet the community's needs; and develop an action plan based on the community's analysis of the data.

He also said at the conclusion of the project, FCCMC and the community engagement team will have received four separate reports including: An economic impact report describing economic activity both in terms of dollars produced and jobs produced for the local economy; a directory of health and human services provided in the local service area; a survey of the health services utilization patterns of the community and the reasons for those patterns; and a compilation of secondary data regarding the community.

Both Doekson and Schott also presented the first report on economic impact representing preliminary work that had been done on the project. The 20-page report discusses national health trends in healthcare; provides a review of county demographic and economic data, summarizing the direct economic benefits of health services and their economic impact on Fulton County's economy.

The report points out that nationwide, the healthcare sector is one of the fastest growing in the United States. In Fulton County, FCCMC is the second largest employer in the county with nearly 400 employees. Nationally, healthcare services have grown from 7.2 percent of the gross national product in 1970 to 16.2 percent in 2007. During the same period, per capita health expenditures increased from \$356 to \$7,421 and employment in the healthcare industry increased 324 percent over the same 37-year period.

The economic impact report also showed that while Fulton County's employment overall has decreased 5.1 percent since 1998, healthcare employment has actually increased by 10.4

See **FCCMC**, Pg. A2

Concrete Box Culvert To Be Installed On Interstate 70

PennDOT announced that on Wednesday, July 29, a project to replace a concrete cross pipe on Interstate 70 near Warfordsburg, Fulton County, will begin.

The project will consist of replacing an existing concrete cross pipe with a concrete box culvert. The project is located approximately .09 miles south of Warfordsburg, Pa., on Interstate 70 where the roadway crosses over a tributary of the Little Tonoloway Creek. The work will take place in both directions of Interstate 70. Short-term, day-

See **I-70 CULVERT**, Pg. A2

County Unemployment Stats Grim

Ranking goes to #66 for June

By Jean Snyder
STAFF WRITER

Fulton County's jobless rate continues to reflect earlier massive layoffs at JLG and other industries as June's unemployment rate climbed significantly from 13.2 percent in May to 15 percent in June according to preliminary figures released by the Department of Labor and Industry this week. The rate, although still lower than March's 15.8 percent rate, was high enough to push the county's ranking from number 65 in May to number 66 (out of 67 counties) or the second highest jobless rate in the state. The coun-

ty's rate remains lower than only Cameron County (#67), with a rate of 18.8 percent. Fulton County over the past six months has regularly changed positions with both Cameron and Elk counties, both also small, rural counties with populations less than 20,000.

The number of unemployed in Fulton County went from 1,000 in May to 1,200 in June, while the number of employed dropped from 6,800 to 6,600 in June. Final June rates will be released at the end of August.

In spite of the increase in employment, June's rates, like those for all of 2009 to date, mark the highest rate for Fulton County in 27 years when the April 1982 rate was 27.2 percent, according to Pa. Dept. of Labor and Indus-

try statistics. Fulton County's unemployment rates stayed at 20-25 percent for most of 1982 and 1983.

By comparison, the June 2008 unemployment rate for Fulton was only 7.1 percent.

Fulton County's current unemployment rates are markedly higher than both the state and national rates. Pennsylvania's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was unchanged in June at 8.3 percent. The state rate remained below the United States' unemployment rate, which increased by one-tenth of a point to 9.5 percent in June. Pennsylvania's rate was up 3.0 percentage points over the year, while the U.S. rate was up 3.9 percentage points.

Southern Fulton Fills Vacant Positions

Several tender resignations; budget impasse remains hot topic

By Chanin Rotz-Mountz
STAFF WRITER

The Southern Fulton School Board found themselves faced with multiple resignations and crucial appointments last Tuesday evening with the clock winding down to a month from the start of the 2009-10 school year.

With much regret the board accepted the resignations of seventh and eighth grade science teacher George Kuhne, technol-

ogy teacher Jeffrey Marteeny and Angela Booth, yearbook advisor. Having already begun advertising the vacant technology position, the board in turn hired Van Duncan as the newest high school science teacher. Duncan is slated to begin his duties in southern Fulton County at a starting salary of \$36,219.

An initial salary of \$36,219 was also selected for the district's newly hired elementary/art teacher Susan Leister. During the 8-1 roll call vote relating to Leister's employment, board member Richard Mosemann dissented.

County resident Jennifer Miller was appointed to the po-

sition of elementary life skills teacher at Step 2, Column 2, which equates to \$39,837 for the 2009-10 school year. Meanwhile, both Via Shaw and Lindsey Yorke were hired as instructional assistants at an hourly rate of \$8.25. The salaries are pending the approval of a new support staff agreement. Board member Ed Yates voted against hiring Shaw.

Joseph Hollenshead was hired as a cross country coach as per the professional staff contract. Last year's cross country team was comprised of five girls and six boys and will likely again number around one dozen team

members this year, it was pointed out.

Board member Tim Mellott questioned if the sports program was cost effective based on the number of kids. Kenny Wuertenberg responded that with any new sport, the district expects the program to grow over time. In addition, it was noted Southern Fulton will be sending wrestling hopefuls to Everett, who will, in turn, be allowing their students to participate on Southern Fulton's cross country squad.

Retroactive approval was granted for Debbie Bahrenburg

See **SFSB**, Pg. A2

DEATHS

England, Samuel, 86, Everett
Ford, Brenda, 48, Hancock
Hoffman, Charles, 91, Three Springs
Lanehart, Charles Sr., 74, Warfordsbg.
Osborne, V. Grace, 77, Everett
Palmer, Catherine, 80, Warfordsbg.
Rhoat, Thomas, 55, Three Springs
Rouzer, Sheldon, 76, Osterburg
Shaw, Bernard, 75, Needmore
Smith, Donald, 72, Breezewood
Sollers, Jada, infant, Fayetteville
White, Margaret, 92, DuBois

OBITUARIES, Page B3



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