

Happy Holidays!



Town Crier 75¢

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Council Raises Utility Rates 87%, Adds 1 Mill For Public Works

By Karen Gould

The cost of living and owning property on Mackinac Island will increase come spring with a new one-mill property tax assessment to fund

the Island's landfill operations. Islanders also will feel the effects of an 87 percent water and sewer commodity rate increase and a five percent readiness-to-serve water and

sewer fee hike. City council approved the substantial increases during its Wednesday, December 7, meeting, along with future rate hikes that can be expected on an annual basis.

The increases would take the city's Department of Public Works out of the red and eventually protect the Island's water and wastewater treatment systems and make funds available

to repair and modernize them.

The hikes were unanimously approved by Council after Board of Public Works Chairman R.D. Musser, Jr. made an

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Sign of the Season...

Mary Patay gets a little help from her dog cross-country skiing down Main Street while taking advantage of fresh snow and sunshine Wednesday, December 7.

Federal Study Next for Island Breakwall Project

By Karen Gould

A \$50,000 federal appropriation to fund a feasibility study for a third breakwall at Mackinac Island now awaits President George Bush's signature. The study would determine if a proposed 950-foot-long rubble mound breakwall would protect the Island's inner harbor, which is vulnerable to wave damage from strong southeast storms. The intended structure would be constructed between the existing east and west breakwalls and would create two entrance channels to the

harbor.

The Island study was included in the new Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives Monday, November 7, by a wide margin of 399 for and 17 against.

"We're one step closer to seeing this project become a reality," said Mackinac Island Mayor Margaret Doud. An additional breakwall would help calm the harbor waters during storms, she said of the

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A view of the east breakwall (at left) and west breakwall from Fort Mackinac.

Beginning to look a lot like Christmas

At almost three years old, Harrison Myers of Mackinac Island appreciated the hand of his mother, Lori, as he approached the towering 17-foot tall blue spruce, this year's community Christmas tree. Centered in the middle of Main Street across from the Arnold Mackinac Island Ferry dock, the tree was donated by Dennis Dombrowski and comes from his family's tree farm near Cheboygan.



Audit: Island School in Great Shape

By Karen Gould

Mackinac Island Public School's fund balance, at \$1.1 million, is enough to operate the facility for the entire year, auditors reported at the Thursday, November 17 meeting of the Mackinac Island Board of Education. At the end

of its last fiscal year on June 30, reported Kari Kortz, a certified public accountant with Rehmann Robson of Cheboygan, the fund balance was up by \$212,560 from the previous year.

The increase in revenues is attributed to Saving Paradise

funding, increased property taxes, and a decrease in projected expenditures because the school did not fill a special education teaching position.

"Your fund balance is substantial compared to other school districts," Ms. Kortz

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Shepler's Takes Case to State High Court

Shepler's Mackinac Ferry has asked the Michigan Supreme Court to review its lawsuit against the City of Mackinac Island, in which it charges the city is unfairly hindering its right to conduct a freight business on the Island. The City's right to restrict Shepler from conducting business activities on its public streets was upheld by the 11th Circuit Court May 20, and affirmed by the Michigan Court of Appeals October 25.

Shepler had argued that restrictions imposed by the City of Mackinac Island on its

freight operation are not imposed on its competitor, Arnold Transit Company, but the courts have said that Arnold doesn't use a city street to load and unload freight, like Shepler does, and, therefore, the city has a right to maintain order on its public thoroughfares by restricting the times Shepler can use the street for its business.

"We are hopeful that the Supreme Court will agree to hear the case, because there are important principals involved," said Shepler's attorney, Aaron J. Gauthier of Patrick and

Kwiatkowski in Cheboygan.

At the Supreme Court level, said Mr. Gauthier, "We are focusing only on the claim that the restrictions imposed on our client, which are not imposed on a similarly situated business, violate our client's constitutional right to equal protection of laws."

Shepler sued the city earlier this year, charging due process and restraint of trade, and taking issue with time restrictions placed on its business license for freight delivery, stating that the city violated the company's

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