

# Bridge Anniversary Banquet Tickets Made Available by Lottery

**By Karen Gould**

People can apply now to enter a lottery for tickets to the Mackinac Bridge 50th Anniversary Celebration banquet at Kewadin Shores Casino in St. Ignace Friday, July 27, at 6 p.m. Those whose names are drawn will be offered the opportunity to purchase a maximum of two \$20 tickets to the dinner.

An application form can be found free online at [www.stignacenevents.com](http://www.stignacenevents.com) in the Shops/Services tab or the shopping page.

Featured speakers will include Tony Earley, chairman and CEO of DTE Energy of Detroit, and Thom Linn, CEO of the law firm Miller Canfield, Paddock and Stone of Detroit. The company was bond counsel for the revenue bonds that financed the construction of the bridge 50 years ago.

Governor Jennifer Granholm also has been invited to speak, but has not committed to attending.

Arriving guests will be greeted at the casino entrance by a team of Anheuser-Busch Budweiser Clydesdales. The draft horses will deliver a ceremonial keg of beer to the casi-

no. They also will be in the celebration parade Saturday in St. Ignace.

Once inside the building, guests will be entertained by a string orchestra from Bahweting Charter School in Sault Ste. Marie. The student musicians, ages 10 and 11, will perform in the fireplace area.

The banquet will be held in a partitioned section to the left of the main lobby, the same room used by the casino for concerts. The area seats 450 people.

"We have limited seating and we're doing this as fairly and equably as possible," said Anne Ottaway of Cedarville, the event coordinator for the celebration. The tickets are not free, rather lottery winners will have the opportunity to purchase them.

"There are limited venues in the area for an event of this size," said Barbara Brown, vice-chair of the Mackinac Bridge Authority and chair of the celebration committee. "There is far greater demand for tickets than seats available."

Tickets for the banquet include a seated dinner and the event program. A cash bar will be available, said Linda

Marshall of St. Ignace, casino restaurant manager.

"This is our first grand-scale dinner function," she said.

During the cocktail hour and dinner, photographs of the bridge will be projected on a screen. Later, a 50th anniversary video about the bridge will be shown to attendees, produced by the Michigan Department of Transportation specifically for the celebration.

Those expected to attend the event include state and federal elected officials, former governors, current and former Mackinac Bridge Authority members, current and former bridge employees, and building trades members.

Bill Gnodtke, chairman of the Mackinac Bridge Authority, will be the master of ceremonies.

While seating for the banquet is limited, many other events are planned in the Straits area over the weekend, said Ms. Brown.

A parade that includes 15-foot-tall puppets, tribal members in ceremonial regalia, horse-drawn carriages, marching bands, floats, high wheel

bicycle riders, Miss Michigan and the National Cherry Queen, and 50 years of cars will take place in St. Ignace and Mackinaw City Saturday. In the evening, fireworks will be fired into the air over the Straits from both St. Ignace and Mackinaw City.

Also taking place Saturday at Bridge View Park in St. Ignace will be ironworker demonstrations, an oral history booth, music, and birthday cakes. Local service groups will have food booths and amateur radio operators will broadcast the event around the world. On display will be a 100-foot replica of the bridge made from Erector sets.

Other events are planned in St. Ignace for the celebration, including a tour of the U.S. Coast Guard lifeboat, a Fish Feast, beer tent, and family events.

Mackinaw City and Mackinac Island also are participating. The Clydesdales will be on the Island Thursday, July 26, and garden tours will be offered.

In addition to the parade and fireworks in Mackinaw City,

evening musical entertainment will be offered at Conkling Park.

An honorary celebration committee was established, consisting of Prentiss M. Brown Jr., Charles T. Fisher III, Lawrence A. Rubin, and William Cochran.

A nonprofit organization was set up to manage the Mackinac Bridge 50th celebration. No state funds or toll revenues are being used for the event, said Ms. Brown.

The anniversary event is supported by volunteer hours, individual gifts, and corporate sponsors, including the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, DTE Energy of Detroit, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Delta Dental of Michigan, Grand Hotel, Arnold Transit Company, Miller Canfield, Paddock and Stone, Michigan Building and Construction Trades, Michigan Laborers-Employees Cooperative Education Trust Fund, Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters, International Union of Operating Engineers, and American Bridge.

## County Property Taxes Increase 8.58%

**By Karen Gould**

County residents will see an 8.58% increase in county operational millage for 2007. Following a truth in taxation hearing, Mackinac County commissioners approved the increase Thursday, June 14.

The county will levy the maximum allowable 4.4631 mills. While last August voters approved 4.5 mills, the 0.0369 mill difference is the result of the Headley Amendment, which limits property tax increases. The amendment does not allow property taxes to increase faster than the rate of inflation.

In December, 1.1818 mills will be levied for the hospital.

To the taxpayer whose prop-

erty has a \$40,000 taxable value, for example, the property tax increase will be \$14.11, Equalization Director James Fenlon told *The Town Crier* Monday, June 18.

The increase, say commissioners, is due in part to the lowering of taxes last year.

In the past, commissioners gave the money to the district health department to support substance abuse programs. Commissioners stopped support of the program last year after several months of discussions involving the accountability of Luce-Mackinac-Alger-Schoolcraft District Health Department (LMAS) operations. Commissioners questioned the use of the funds in Mackinac County and decided to keep the funds for the county and give a tax reduction to residents. Commissioners then used state funds to supplement the county coffers. At that time, commissioners agreed to keep \$137,135

from the TriCounty Convention Facilities Tax and the 4% Statewide Liquor Tax. The state's 83 counties receive a distribution from the fund and last year, Mackinac County's share totaled \$137,135.

The additional \$137,135 in revenue allowed commissioners to lower taxes and the county levied 4.1104 mills, which amounted to an average savings of \$8.17 to taxpayers.

This year's tax hike also is due to the standard taxable value 3.7% inflation rate and new construction. The increase also accounts for a renewal of a maximum of 4.5 mills voted on by county residents in August 2006.

The July tax bill also will include 4.4631 allocated operating mills, the 6.0 mill state education tax, and in some cases local school taxes. The December tax bill will assess the 1.1818 hospital voted mills and also may include some local school taxes and township taxes.

## Archery Program To Begin July 11

The 4-H summer archery program will begin its six-week session Tuesday, July 10.

The program will meet in Great Turtle Park from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. every Tuesday to August 14. A shoot-off and cookout is planned for the final day of the program.

### Gastroenterologist

*Ann Silverman, MD*

### Neurologist

*Robert Spitzer, MD*

at the Mackinac Island Medical Center

July 12 and August 16 Dr. Silverman

July 11 and August 15 Dr. Spitzer

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