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TRIBUNE-REVIEW**

Briefs: District's tentative budget open to public

Thursday, May 27, 2004

EAST

PLUM SCHOOLS

Plum School District's preliminary \$46.4 million budget, which contains a 3-mill tax increase that would boost the rate to 21 mills, will be available to the public from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays at the administration building on School Road.

The increase means the owner of a home assessed at \$100,000 would pay \$300 more per year in property taxes to the school district.

Finance committee members are expected to suggest cuts in the proposed spending plan during their 6:30 p.m. meeting June 3. The school board is expected to finalize the budget during a meeting at 7:30 p.m. June 29.

WOODLAND HILLS SCHOOLS

BOMB THREAT INTERRUPTS SCHOOL DAY

Approximately 367 students were evacuated from Woodland Hills East Junior High on Wednesday after a bomb threat was phoned in to the school office, the third in district schools this month.

The call was received at about 7 a.m. Students and staff immediately were evacuated to a nearby stadium.

Turtle Creek police and firefighters did not find any explosives, and classes resumed a short time later.

PENN HILLS

UNITY IN COMMUNITY EVENT TO PROCEED

Penn Hills officials have decided that this year's Unity in Community Days will go on as scheduled July 9 and 10 at the Linton Middle School campus.

Howard Davidson, planning and economic development director, said the municipality will contribute \$25,000 for the event, plus \$5,500 to the Penn Hills

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Arts Council, the co-sponsor.

Penn Hills officials have yet to pass this year's proposed \$21.3 million budget, and some council members questioned whether the municipality could afford a celebration with live entertainment, rides, games, a children's tent and fireworks. "There was some talk of canceling the fireworks, but I'm happy to say we can go ahead and book everything," Davidson said.

CITY

EAST LIBERTY RETIREMENT SEMINAR SET FOR FRIDAY

While the concept of retirement to some people is a life of leisure and fun-filled activities, the reality for many retirees is a feeling of societal insignificance that can lead to loneliness, depression and early death.

The Center for Business, Religion and Public Life will offer a symposium on finding "Purpose and Meaning in Retirement" from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 616 N. Highland Ave., East Liberty. The program will feature Nora Dowd Eisenhower, the secretary of the state Department of Aging.

The program, including lunch, costs \$12. For more information or to reserve a space, call Candace Couch at (412) 362-5610 ext. 2194, or e-mail her at ccouch@pts.edu.

MORNINGSIDE WOMAN SENTENCED ON DRUG CHARGES

A Morningside woman was sentenced in federal court Wednesday to three years' probation and six months' home confinement on two counts of distributing and possession with intent to distribute oxycodone.

Amy Vivio, 44, of Antietam Street, who pleaded to the charges, received the sentence from U.S. District Judge David S. Cercone, who approved a government motion for a reduced sentence in return for her substantial assistance in the investigation.

Vivio was one of 29 people arrested in January 2003 in a roundup of what authorities called "street-level" drug dealers in Westmoreland County.

PITTSBURGH CITY SCHOOLS STUDENTS HONORED FOR SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

The Career Literacy for African-American Youth program honored 50 students from five city high schools with a banquet Tuesday.

The goal of the youth program is to create a network of support and resources to help black high school students in the Pittsburgh region attain the

postsecondary education and training necessary to enter the job market and reach their fullest potential. Local professionals, particularly from the legal community, serve as mentors while college students serve as tutors.

Students from Langley, Oliver, Peabody, South Vo-Tech and Taylor Alderdice were recognized during the evening program.

REGION

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

ONORATO TO VISIT ALL COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES

Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato plans to visit each of the county's 130 municipalities, starting with five in the Monongahela Valley next week.

The trips are being billed as a chance for residents, public officials and community leaders to have their concerns heard. The first trip, scheduled from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. June 3, will be through Dravosburg, Glassport, Liberty, Lincoln and Port Vue, and include a 12:30 p.m. lunch with senior citizens in the basement of the Port Vue borough building.

County officials such as Economic Development Director Dennis Davin and Parks Department Director Andy Baechle will accompany Onorato on the tours.

ALLEGHENY/WASHINGTON COUNTIES

77 DRIVERS APPARENTLY DIDN'T TAKE THE HINT

State police wrote 77 speeding tickets in four hours Tuesday on Interstate 79 in Allegheny and Washington counties in an operation that gave motorists a chance to slow down before being pulled over.

The fastest vehicle cited was clocked at 89 mph, PennDOT spokeswoman Cathy Tress said Wednesday. The speed limit is 55 mph. Police also issued 19 other traffic citations and made one drug arrest.

"Operation Sneak Peek" showed motorists their speed on electronic monitors. Those who did not slow down were stopped by troopers stationed at the Carnegie and Canonsburg interchanges. State police and PennDOT plan to repeat the operation on other local highways this summer.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

MINING RESUMES AFTER LANDOWNERS INFORMED

A company has been allowed to resume coal mining in Washington County -- seven weeks after state officials shut down the mine because property owners weren't told of the mining.

The state Department of Environmental Protection in April shut down a section of the High Quality Mine in Fallowfield because Maple Creek Mining didn't notify

landowners -- including the township -- of plans to mine beneath their property.

State law requires companies to tell landowners six months before mining begins, unless property owners waive the requirement. Stephen Cohen, a spokesman for Maple Creek, said the landowners waived the requirement Monday, and mining has resumed.

BEAVER COUNTY MOM WHO WON CUSTODY GIVES UP RIGHTS TO SON

A woman who successfully battled child welfare officials for custody of her son gave up her parental rights for the boy this week because she thinks he will be better off with the foster mother, who wants to adopt him.

Selena Underwood, 21, of Beaver Falls, had her 8-month-old son removed in October 2001 by county workers who mistakenly thought he was malnourished. A judge granted Underwood custody of the child last October, but she changed her mind after deciding it would be too traumatic to separate her son from his longtime foster mother, Samantha Moreland.

CRAWFORD COUNTY JUDGE DISMISSES CLAIMS AGAINST CONNEAUT PARK

A financially troubled amusement park has won a court victory.

The state Commonwealth Court this week upheld a ruling by a Crawford County judge that dismissed all claims made by former owner Gary Harris against Conneaut Lake Park.

Harris is jailed in Mahoning County, Ohio, awaiting sentencing for federal income tax evasion. He gave the park to the community in 1997 but later claimed to hold a 99-year lease to much of its grounds and ownership of several rides.

Tim Kaider, president of the Conneaut Lake Park Board of Trustees, said the Commonwealth Court ruling should clear the way for the park to obtain a loan it needs.

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL PLANS SUIT OVER PROPOSED LIBRARY CLOSURES

The Erie County Council voted to sue County Executive Rick Schenker over whether he has the authority to close two libraries.

The debate over Schenker's authority began when council called on his administration to keep all six public libraries open until the end of the year so that a long-term plan could be developed. Schenker vetoed the resolution, but council overruled it.

About a month later, Schenker announced that two branches would close. He

has said the closings are part of a memorandum of understanding that was approved by council.

GREENE COUNTY MAN CONVICTED ON ANIMAL CRUELTY CHARGES

A man was convicted of animal cruelty after six horses were found dead on his family's farm in Greene County.

Robert Anderson, 74, of Camerson, W.Va., was fined the maximum \$750 for each of three summary violations on Tuesday. He was cited after six horses were found dead on his family's farm in Aleppo on Feb. 18; a seventh horse had to be euthanized.

Anderson was charged again in March after 10 horses were found to be in poor health. Anderson represented himself during the hearing and maintained he was innocent. He said he suspected the horses were poisoned.

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

LOCAL TEACHERS AMONG THOSE IN TECH PROGRAM

More than 100 teachers from across the state -- including a dozen from Western Pennsylvania -- will head to Harrisburg this summer to share their latest innovations in school technology as part of the "Keystones: Technology Integrators" program.

Teachers from Butler Area, Fox Chapel Area, Franklin Regional, Freeport Area, North Hills, Our Lady of Grace, Peters Township, Pittsburgh, South Allegheny, South Butler County and South Fayette Township schools were among the 102 teachers selected from a field of nearly 500 to participate in a four-day conference and future state and national technology conferences.

This is the first year of the Keystones program, which is meant to celebrate teachers who use model practices.

FREE BOOKLET DISCUSSES CHILDHOOD PROBLEMS

A free booklet on recognizing numerous childhood problems such as drug and alcohol addiction, anxiety and eating disorders and suicidal behavior is available without charge from Gateway Rehabilitation Center.

The resource is aimed at parents and teachers. "Childhood Disorders: Recognizing and Understanding Student Psychopathology" -- written by Michael Crabtree, a psychology professor at Washington & Jefferson College, and Hillary Mangis, a Duquesne University psychology graduate student -- is available by calling Gateway at (800) 472-1177.



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