

# LANSGING COMMUNITY NEWS

Serving the Town and Village of Lansing, Cayuga Heights, King Ferry & Genoa

"Not quite paradise, but a nice place to live."

Wednesday, April 9, 1997 ♦♦♦ Vol. II No. 15



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**Building Project Costs Contained:**

## School Board Moves Towards New Budget

With virtually all continuing items in the Lansing School District's soon-to-be-proposed 1997-98 budget in place, the School Board learned at last week's Thursday evening meeting that the building project's first year's net interest costs are coming in significantly under budget and evaluated requests for new staffing positions totalling approximately \$280,000.

When the School Board took the building project to the public, "We projected a 5 percent tax rate increase," Superintendent Andrea Price reminded the Board. Assuming a "steady state" budget, that increase should be below 3 percent. If all staffing requests were to be approved, the tax rate would rise by 6 percent.

The reduction in building project costs is due to debt service offsets gained with arbitrage investments, said Price. "Tom (Jones) has invested wisely."

President Andy LaVigne noted that the draft budget includes funds to cover the Board's financial projection of a still-to-be-negotiated settlement package with district faculty. If the eventual settlement turns out to be higher than the Board anticipates, the allocation of funds within the budget will have to be shifted, he said.

The Board reviewed prioritized requests for 16 additional faculty and staff positions. The positions were justified on the basis of known shifts in the student base as larger classes move through the Middle school into the High School, projected overall District increases in enrollment and the desire to maintain smaller class sizes.

Though the Board members seemed to

support the logic of each staffing request, all expressed concern about the aggregate cost and spent considerable time discussing what the voters would consider to be a fair and acceptable tax increase.

As Executive Session discussions continued after the open portion of the meeting, the Board's decisions will not be known until tomorrow's (April 10) 7:00 pm Open Forum in the High School cafeteria. When the School Board convenes in the library immediately after the Open Forum, it is expected to adopt the newly presented budget, subject of course, to citizen feedback generated during the Open Forum.

## Town Board May Change The Water Surcharge Rate; Gets Zoning Advice

By Aline & Matthew Shulman

Residential customers in Lansing Water Districts served by Bolton Point may be seeing an 8.6% increase in their minimum quarterly water bill in July if the Town Board approves a request from New York State Electric & Gas to alter the surcharge structure to a graduated to a flat rate basis.

Currently, all Bolton Point users are charged a flat \$2.55 per 1000 gallon water consumption charge plus a surcharge of 25%, 40% or 60% based on the quarterly volume used. The surcharge raises the \$114,000 needed by the town to pay for the town portion of the capital costs as well as

the operation and maintenance (O&M) of the distribution system. Covered items include the Wilson Road and Bean Hill storage tanks and a pressure reducing valve on Brickyard Hill.

Though all system users benefit from these capital improvements, the need for them largely results from the peak water needs of the industrial users. This was why the surcharge was set at 25% for those who use less than 50,000 gallons per quarter, 40% for those who use 50-600,000 gallons per quarter and 60% for those who use more than 600,000 gallons per quarter.

Average Quarterly Use By Bolton Point Consumers Of >600,000 Gallons/Quarter (1996)	
Borg-Warner	11,841,400 gal/quarter
Cargill Salt	1,527,000 " "
Louis Gossett	1,070,250 " "
Lans. Res. Ctr.	881,000 " "

In January of 1997, folks at NYSEG were dismayed to see their quarterly water bill. Though the 615,000 gallons they'd used in the last quarter of '96 only exceeded the consumption level they'd predicted in 1992 when they calculated public water use by 12.6%, the bill was 85.9% higher. The higher cost was due, to two Bolton Point rate increases and to higher than anticipated use that topped the 600,000 gallon threshold and bumped the surcharge from 45% to 60%.

Though the explanation was simple, NYSEG's consternation resulted in NYSEG engineer John Marabella's visiting the Town Board's March meeting to request relief.

(Continued on page 2)

## Trout Season Opens In Bright Sunshine After Monday Snowfall



SILVER-BELLIED RAINBOWS were abundant below Ludlowville Falls. The lighter the silver, the more recently the trout came upstream from Cayuga Lake.

## Lansing Is First Upstate Fire Dept. To Acquire Thermal Imaging

With the specialized training that Lansing Fire Chief Chris Burris and three of his officers have just received in New Jersey in the use of a new commercially-available military infrared imaging technology called the Cairns' IRIS, that is expected, without any exaggeration, to revolutionize fire science.

The Cairns' IRIS projects finely calibrated images of heat sources on a helmet-mounted monitor. For the first time, fire-fighters will be able to "see" heat-emitting images (such as an unconscious victim or a plume of superheated gas that is threatening to ignite a room's interior) in the interior of burning structures where thick curtains of smoke absolutely block the best 20-20 human vision at a distance of 4-6 inches.

After testing the unit last summer at a controlled burn on Lansing Station Road, the Department concluded that it would be an important safety tool to (a) more speedily locate residents within burning structures and (b) to "size-up" burning structures to protect fire-fighters while choosing the most efficient attack plan to knock-down fires and save structures.

Lansing became the first upstate New York community to acquire the \$25,000 system last December after an anonymous donor contributed \$15,000 to the Fire District to help finance its acquisition. (See Dec. 12 Lansing Community News).

When Lansing's fire officers first rolled into the Bergen County Police and Fire Academy complex in Clifton, N.J., the city block-long mock community of motels, restaurants, garages, beauty parlors, high-rises and cinemas resembled a Hollywood back

lot. The reality, however, was sobering. "Their training facility allowed us to experience the Cairns' IRIS in residential, commercial, hi-rise and hazardous material settings," said Burris. In short, our fire-fighters got practical experience at "seeing" in total obscurity in situations similar to what they may encounter in our mixed-use town.

"We 'saw' heat rolling down off the ceiling," recalled Burris. "If you can target superheated gases before they ignite or can access a smoldering heat source in a parti-

tion, it's not only more efficient, but a safer way to fight fire," he explained. "After you see this unit in action," said Burris, "you ask yourself how you got along without it."

Lansing's officers also experienced some of the technology's limitations. Because the helmet-mounted unit has a 3 foot field of vision, fine motor skills are impaired at short range. Because only the helmet-wearer can "see" the infrared images, verbal communications to crew members must be precise. "You must develop a new way to think and communicate," he said.

The Cairns' IRIS is a navigational tool, said Burris. "It can't make you think better or fight fires better, but being able to see in a smoky environment is a real plus."

Drawing a parallel between the Cairns' IRIS and the air-packs worn to fight interior and haz-mat fires, Burris said that all Lansing fire-fighters will eventually be trained in its use. "This unit will be used on every call to build up an experiential base so we can use the technology easily under crisis conditions," he concluded.

Because the military technology was only recently declassified, there are only 150 fire companies in the United States equipped with thermal imaging units. In the Empire State, New York City has two units and Lansing has one.

It's something every department will have in 20 years. In the meantime, Lansing will be offering access to the infrared imaging technology to neighboring fire companies through Mutual Aid, said Burris, though "it will be our officers doing the interior work."

In Lansing, the future is operational now.



5-STORY TRAINING TOWER awaits light-striped Lansing Fire Department officers Dale Oplinger, Brad George, Scott Hollister (top) and Chief Chris Burris (bottom) flanked at the left by New York City Fire Department trainers. The Cairns' IRIS thermal imaging unit is mounted on Chief Burris's protective helmet.

**STOP PRESS**

As of Monday, Apr. 7 at 10:00 am, no one has picked up petitions for either of the two open Lansing School Board seats, according to the Superintendent's office. Petitions are available at the District Office. To be valid they must carry the signatures and addresses of 25 eligible voters, state the name and address of the candidate and be filed with the clerk of the district **no later than April 21, 1997.**

Space Donated By T.G. Miller, P.C. Engineers & Surveyors



## Lansing Student Exchange Program International Night 19th Annual Chicken Barbecue Dinner

High School Cafeteria ♦ Tuesday, Apr. 15, 1997 ♦ 5:00-7:30 p.m.

Fancy Cake Auction Half Chicken \$6.00 Quarter Chicken \$4.00 Carry Outs Available

Proceeds support Rotary foreign exchange students who live for a year with host families and attend Lansing High School. In exchange, selected Lansing students have a similar opportunity to live and study abroad. Additionally, proceeds help support Lansing Faculty Association scholarships and various Lansing Lions Club community projects.

