

Commissioners OK grant to buy 26 properties

By DAVID THOMPSON
dthompson@sungazette.com

The Lycoming County commissioners Thursday approved a grant agreement that would provide about \$614,000 of an anticipated \$2.1 million in federal funding for county's hazard mitigation buyout program.

According to county hazard mitigation planner Frances W. Jones, the agreement would allow five municipalities to buy 26 flood-prone properties.

Municipalities to receive the funding are Woodward, Lycoming, Lewis, Muncy Creek and Nippenose townships, Jones said.



Flood mitigation

Jones said the 26 properties include a trailer court with about 40 pads.

The funds are administered to the county through the state Emergency Management Administration, she said.

Gov. Ed Rendell is scheduled to present the money to the county at 2:30 p.m. Sunday at Executive Plaza, she said.

"The upstart of this is that the mitigation money was set aside because of the Hurricane Ivan disaster," she

said.

The commissioners approved a county Geographical Information System product that provides county maps that include tax parcels and assessment data, flood zones, buildings, road centers, streams, municipal boundaries, a tax-map grid and aerial photography.

The data will better show whether homes, businesses and other structures are located in the flood zone, county planner Allen E. Kaplan said.

The software may not be useful to the typical homeowner but it can provide critical information for developers or municipal planners, he said.

The software would be updated every year to keep it current to any changes due to property splits and subdivisions or ownership changes, he said.

The next generation of the product, which should be available by the end of the year, would be much more sophisticated and include color aerial

photographs that are of much higher resolution, Kaplan said.

The commissioners approved a \$3 million state Redevelopment Assistance Capital grant application, according to Fred Marty, manager of the Eastern Lycoming YMCA sports complex construction project.

The grant would fund a portion of the proposed \$11 million complex in Muncy Township, he said.

The commissioners also approved the purchase of digital video surveillance equipment for the county prison.

According to prison warden Kevin DeParlos, a \$69,000 grant would allow the prison to install 64 video cameras.



Transition nearly complete

CRAIG S. MCKIBBEN JR./Sun-Gazette

Nancy Hodge, a part-time aide at the Hughesville Area Public Library puts books on a shelf in the new Fifth Street facility. Nearly all of the stacks have been moved into the new library, as evidenced by the empty shelves at the old library, right. Library officials expect organization and set up at the new library to take about two weeks.

New library set to open June 1 in Hughesville

By MARK MARONEY
mmaroney@sungazette.com

HUGHESVILLE — Savannah Flick described what it was like moving about 20,000 books in a day.

"It was a lot of work but we had fun," the 18-year-old borough resident and Hughesville High School senior said.

Flick and seven other members of the school's Family Career and Community Leaders of America club spent more than six hours Monday packing up 20,000 books and some periodicals at the closed library on South Main Street and moving them to the new Hughesville Area Public Library

on South Fifth Street.

Men from the Bethany United Methodist Church also helped in the move.

Flick said the weight of some boxes took all the strength she and the other students could muster.

"Some of the girls loading the truck said 'be considerate putting books in boxes,'" Flick said.

"You hear the work ethic of younger children doesn't seem that great but they just dug in and really worked," said William Sherwood, library building-campaign chairman.

Add another factor — rain — to the equation. It poured for most of the day, she said.

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Beiter Block demo contract awarded to local contractor

By R.A. WALKER
rwalker@sungazette.com

The downtown cinemplex project inched toward reality Thursday night when City Council awarded the contract for demolition of the Beiter Block properties.

The contract went by default to the higher of two bids received due to the low bidder's failure to submit all required bid documents.

Lycoming Supply, which received the contract, bid \$892,537 to tear down the Beiter Block structures located just to the west of Hepburn Street along West Fourth and West Edwin streets.

The bid was more than \$140,000 higher than the original estimate for the work, according to John Grado, city director of economic and community development. However, he said a change order will be issued to trim the project costs down to \$749,861 with state Department of Environmental Protection approval.

The changes involve abatement of asbestos in flooring and roofing material that Grado said can be removed without smashing up the materials and making the asbestos airborne.

With the change order, he said, the project will be "more in line with the estimate" of the projects engineers.

The Beiter Block structures are owned by Susquehanna Health System, which also purchased the nearby Hepburn Plaza while contemplating since-abandoned plans for construction of a downtown medical center.

The cost of the cinemplex project is about \$6.25 million, about \$4 million of which will be provided by the developer, West Third Street Partners.

The demolition, site preparation and acquisition costs will be absorbed by the city using about \$500,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant blight elimination money and \$1.75 million in state money targeted for the downtown revitalization initiative.

According to Grado, the demolition is to begin in early June and should be completed this summer.

"We want to complete the (demolition phase) by mid-August," Grado said.

He said the developer's goal is to be open for business next spring.

The contract and plans for reducing the total cost were reviewed and recommended to council by both the planning commission and council's economic revitalization committee.

When questioned about the low number of bidders, Grado said contributing factors may include other projects contractors are currently working on and the timing of when the work must be done.

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- Crime commission update presented

Lycoming Career and Technology Center

Tech center committee OKs preliminary budget

By BECKY LOCK
block@sungazette.com

HUGHESVILLE — Increases in salaries and benefits contributed to a 4-percent increase in the Lycoming Career and Technology Center's preliminary 2006-07 budget.

The center's joint operating committee approved the \$1.23 million spending plan Thursday.

It does not include any new teaching positions.

"In light of the recent elections, I think it's important that we maintain integrity in the salary system," said Donna Gavitt, a committee member who represents the East Lycoming School Board.

The center does not levy a real-estate tax; therefore, its budgets are not directly related to tax increases.

However, the four member school districts — East Lycoming, Montoursville, Muncy and Warrior Run — must approve the center's budget as part of their own budgets.

If a district were to deny the financial plan, it would go

"In light of the recent elections, I think it's important that we maintain integrity in the salary system."

Donna Gavitt, Lycoming Career and Technology Center committee member

back through the development process, said John T. Pulver, center executive director.

The board also appointed McCormick Law Firm as solicitor; Parente Randolph as local auditor; and Muncy Bank and Trust as the "point-of-contact" bank. (See COMMITTEE, Page B-4)

Voters' sour mood may portend fall elections

By MARK SCOLFORO
Associated Press Writer

HARRISBURG — A voter revolt that ousted at least 14 sitting Pennsylvania lawmakers is adding to the anxiety of politicians already nervous about the public's increasing dissatisfaction with the country's direction.

The biggest issue in Tuesday's Pennsylvania primary was a short-lived law that gave hefty salary increases to legislators and other government officials.

Twelve of the 14 voted for it, as did six others in races that remain too close to call.

The results were particularly unusual for a state where only 18 legislators had lost since 1996, including both primaries and general elections.

(See VOTERS', Page B-4)



Gov. Ed Rendell addresses supporters Thursday in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg.

Many Republicans withheld votes from Santorum



SANTORUM

By PETER JACKSON
Associated Press Writer

HARRISBURG — Nearly 22,000 Pennsylvania Republicans who voted for Lynn Swann as the GOP nominee for governor withheld their support from U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum in Tuesday's

primary. Both candidates were unopposed. Swann, the former Pittsburgh Steelers star, received 574,276 votes, while Santorum, who is seeking a third term in the Senate, drew 552,559, according to unofficial totals compiled by the Pennsylvania Depart-

ment of State that were 99 percent complete Thursday.

Santorum held his own in the important, GOP-dominated counties surrounding Philadelphia, winning about 3,000 more votes than Swann.

But he lagged Swann

in counties in the southwestern corner of the state that is their mutual home turf. In Allegheny County alone, which includes Pittsburgh, the gap was nearly 7,000 votes.

In the Nov. 7 general election, Swann will face (See MANY, Page B-4)