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West Branch Manufacturers: Swann fumbled Gubernatorial candidate cancels local appearance

By LAUREN McLANE
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Republican gubernatorial candidate Lynn Swann canceled a keynote speech to the West Branch Manufacturers' Association 11 days before its annual dinner, citing a conflicting campaign stop in Erie with former Gov. Tom Ridge.

The group canceled Tuesday's event and will plan a dinner in the fall with a different speaker, according to Executive Director Michael J. Sharbaugh.

"His chief scheduler contacted William J. Metzger Sr. and said Swann was cancelling to go to Erie," Sharbaugh said, adding Metzger was contacted Friday.

With more than 270 reservations for the event and more coming in Tuesday morning — another company called requesting a table for 10 — many were disappointed to hear the news, Sharbaugh said.

"I was going to vote for him but now I won't," Sharbaugh quoted several people as saying.

"It's hard to understand," he said. "It makes you wonder, if he were going to be governor, would he keep his commitments?"

Sharbaugh said the association would have understood if Swann had had to cancel for "a legitimate reason — like he had to have emergency surgery — but not just because he got a better offer."

Meanwhile, plans must be canceled for a long-planned event.

"The Genetti has graciously agreed to let us out of our contract. We really do appreciate that. Bill Metzger is refunding funds raised," he added.

Metzger, a member of the group's board and this year's dinner chairman, explained the process of coordinating a speaker with a dinner date.

"We started discussions with Mr. Swann's chief scheduler Jan. 25. We sent a letter putting the request in writing. We left it open to two months for them to pick the date," Metzger said.

"The dinner is generally held in May or June of each year. We float the date according to the keynote speaker. His camp

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SWANN



MARK NANCE/Sun-Gazette

Church of the Annunciation Pastor John K. Manno, left, Curtin Middle School Dean of Students Randy Zangara and Campbell Street Center Executive Director Rocky Boone discuss how to stop gangs after viewing an Internet broadcast of "Preventing Gangs in Our Communities" Tuesday in the Commissioners Board Room at Executive Plaza.

Time to take action National broadcast on gangs prompts local discussion

By STEPHANIE FARR
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Much like the experience of watching a movie, there were dim lights and technical difficulties, but it was what happened after the "film" stopped rolling that really mattered.

Representatives from community organizations across the county gathered Tuesday afternoon for a national broadcast titled "Preventing Gangs in Our Communities," sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice. It was sponsored locally by the county courts, the District Attorney's Office and the Adult and Juvenile Probation offices.

The broadcast featured a panel discussion with a criminal justice professor from Arizona, a church official from Indiana, a school resource officer from Tennessee and a district attorney from Alabama. It lasted about an hour and included such topics as

how to identify a gang member, parental involvement and community unification.

Although the broadcast was informative, a local group discussion held after the program's conclusion focused on some of the topics the panel members missed.

Rocky Boone, executive director of The Center, said he was "disappointed" that the panel discussion never focused on what he sees as the big issue in gang prevention — jobs. People with criminal records have trouble obtaining jobs in the area, he said.

Boone said he has found that a "changing mentality" emerging among youth — a "living-large" mentality that has kids believing material things are more easily obtained through a life of crime than through a life of hard work.

"They're drawn in with getting the finer things," Boone said. "More and more, these kids think a life as a drug dealer will get

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MARK NANCE/Sun-Gazette

Ed Robbins, chief juvenile probation officer leads a discussion after the broadcast of "Preventing Gangs in Our Communities."

New Osama bin Laden tape Al Qaida leader: Moussaoui not involved with 9/11 plans

By MAAMOUN YOUSSEF
Associated Press Writer

CAIRO, Egypt — Osama bin Laden purportedly said in an audio tape Tuesday that Zacarias Moussaoui — the only person convicted in the U.S. for the Sept. 11 attacks — had nothing to do with the operation.

"He had no connection at all with Sept. 11," the speaker, claiming to be bin Laden, said in the tape posted on the Internet.

"I am the one in charge of the 19 brothers and I never assigned brother Zacarias to be with them in that mission," he said, referring to the 19 hijackers.

The al-Qaida chief said the Sept. 11 hijackers were divided into two groups, "pilots and assistants."

"Since Zacarias Moussaoui was still learning how to fly, he wasn't No. 20 in the group, as your government has claimed," bin Laden said. "It knows this very well," he added.

Bin Laden said Moussaoui was not a security risk for al-Qaida, because he did not have knowledge of the plot.

"Brother Moussaoui was arrested two weeks before the events, and if he had known



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Al Qaida chief Osama bin Laden is seen in this undated file photo. He purportedly said in an audio tape Tuesday that Zacarias Moussaoui, the only person convicted in the U.S. for the Sept. 11 attacks, had nothing to do with the operation.

something — even very little — about the Sept. 11 group, we would have informed the leader of the operation, Mohammad Atta, and the others ... to leave America before being discovered," bin Laden said.

Bin Laden said Moussaoui's confession — that he helped plan the attacks — was "void," calling it the result of "pressures exercised against him during four and a half years" in U.S. prison.

It was not clear which confession bin Laden was referring to by Moussaoui, who frequently trumpeted his claim that he was involved in the Sept. 11 attacks. But his defense lawyers cast doubt on his claims, saying he only wanted to be sentenced to death to become a martyr.

Moussaoui, a 37-year-old Frenchman and admitted al-Qaida member, was sentenced to life in prison earlier this

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County commissioners approve salaries for next elected officials

By DAVID THOMPSON
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Future elected officials in Lycoming County will receive cost-of-living adjustments of 2.5 percent each year from 2008 from 2011.

On Tuesday, the county commissioners approved a salary schedule for commissioners, treasurer, controller, register and recorder, prothonotary and coroner, county controller Krista Rogers said.

Salaries must be set prior to the filing of petitions in an election year so that candidates know the salaries of the offices they are running for, she said.

Commissioners will earn \$62,370 in 2008 to \$67,165 in 2011, according to a salary schedule provided by the county.

County officials' salaries through 2011

Position	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Commissioners	\$59,365	\$60,849	\$62,370	\$63,929	\$65,527	\$67,165
Treasurer	51,423	52,708	54,025	55,376	56,760	58,179
Controller	51,423	52,708	56,554	57,905	59,289	60,708
Register & Recorder	53,473	54,758	56,075	57,426	58,810	60,229
Prothonotary	53,473	54,758	56,075	57,426	58,810	60,229
Coroner	51,423	52,708	54,025	55,376	56,760	58,179

SOURCE: Lycoming County Commissioners

The treasurer will earn \$54,025 in 2008 and \$58,179 in 2011, according to the schedule.

The controller will earn \$56,554 in 2008 and \$60,708 in 2011.

The register and recorder, and prothonotary will earn \$56,075 in 2008 and \$60,229 in 2011.

The coroner will earn

\$54,025 in 2008 and \$58,179 in 2011.

Rogers said the salaries of the controller, register and recorder, and prothonotary includes between \$2,050 and \$2,529 in additional compensation because those employees perform other tasks that fall outside their primary job descriptions.

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Fuel prices could mean higher school taxes

By BECKY LOCK
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HUGHESVILLE — A projected increase of at least 71 cents in the cost of heating oil could result in higher taxes for residents of the East Lycoming School Board.

The board approved its preliminary budget May 9 under a .38 millage rate hike, but with the understanding that

East Lycoming School District

the expected increase could be as low as .12 mills.

The final rate would depend on state subsidies and last minute changes. One of those changes will be fuel costs, said business manager David Maciejewski, who recently re-

ceived fuel costs through an agreement with the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit.

"The fuel price is not good," Maciejewski said at Tuesday's board meeting.

In 2005-06, heating oil cost \$1.61 per gallon, he said, compared with the \$2.32 to \$2.49 per gallon range projected for the new school year.

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Good morning, Jan McLaughlin. Thank you for subscribing to the Sun-Gazette!

