

THE COOS COUNTY DEMOCRAT

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Publishing news & views of Lancaster, Groveton, Whitefield, Lunenburg & other towns of the upper Connecticut River valley of New Hampshire & Vermont

democrat@salmonpress.com

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TELEPHONE: 603-788-4939

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Groveton mill property attracting potential buyers

Brooklyn Dam hydro project in consultation phase

By Edith Tucker
etucker@salmonpress.com

GROVETON — Both wood pellet producers and potential biomass investors have expressed interest in looking at the former paper mill properties, Groveton Acquisitions LLC spokesman Jerry Epstein reported in a Friday telephone interview. The rising price of oil is sparking more interest in wood pellet production, and generating electricity from a renewable resource, such as biomass, remains an attractive possibility, said Epstein, noting that he has been in touch with Jeff Hayes of North Country Council which has a \$250,000 EDA grant to explore viable reuses of the property.

Greater interest in the site and its buildings has led Epstein to extend the deadline before he and his business partner

William Firestone of Capital Recovery Group will decide whether or not to tear all or a substantial portion of the existing mill buildings down.

"I'm encouraged," Epstein said. "I just don't want to carry the buildings through another winter."

He is concerned, however, Epstein said, that 5440 Hydro Inc., has filed notification of its intent to file for an application for a new license, including pre-application and consultation, using the traditional licensing process (TLP), in connection with the non-operational Brooklyn Dam hydro facility on the Upper Ammonoosuc River, which Groveton Acquisitions owns.

These documents were filed on Jan. 17 with the Federal Energy Commission (FERC), and a legal notice was published in last week's issue of this newspaper. The filings are available at FERC's e-library online or at Ampersand Gilman Energy LLC at 35 Riverside Avenue in Gilman, Vt.

The energy company first
Groveton Mill, PAGE A3

Tax impact of proposed WMRSD operating budget up 9.05%

If all warrant articles pass, 11.75%

By Edith Tucker
etucker@salmonpress.com

WHITEFIELD — Even though the proposed 2012-2013 WMRSD operating budget remains under \$19 million, the five District towns would collectively experience a 9.05 percent increase in their school tax rates if voters adopt it. The projected 2012-2013 District assessment for the proposed operating budget — the monies that must be raised by local property taxpayers — is \$9,895,233, up by \$821,001 from this year's actual assessment of \$9,074,232.

Each member town's District assessment is based on 60 percent Average Daily Membership (attendance) and 40 percent on equalized valuation.

Carroll's projected 2013 District assessment is \$2,931,859 —nearing \$3 million. The town,

made up of Twin Mountain and Bretton Woods, has a 2011 net assessed valuation of \$398,810,506 or very nearly \$400 million. Its projected 2012 tax rate would be \$7.35 per \$1,000, up by 50 cents from this year's \$6.85 — a 7.32 percent increase.

Dalton's projected 2013 District assessment is \$960,103. The town has a 2011 assessed valuation of \$93,356,808, the District's lowest. Its projected 2012 tax rate would be \$10.28, up 23 cents from this year's \$10.05 — a 2.33 percent increase.

Jefferson's projected 2013 District assessment is \$1,568,866, and its 2011 net assessed valuation, \$123,359,683 — the fourth lowest in the five-town District. Its projected 2012 tax rate would be \$12.72, up \$1.04 from this year's \$11.68 — a 9.27 percent increase.

Lancaster's projected 2013 District assessment is \$2,350,327, and its 2011 net as-

WMRSD, PAGE A4



PHOTO BY MIKE PELCHAT

Guy Jubinville works two days a week in Mount Washington State Park doing all kinds of chores, from shoveling snow around the entrance to the Sherman Adams Building to refinishing the Park information desk.

Guy Jubinville works on the Mt. Washington summit

By Edith Tucker
etucker@salmonpress.com

SARAGENT'S PURCHASE — Guy Jubinville of Twin Mountain works full-time in summer in and part-time in winter — an average of two days a week — in Mount Washington State Park. Technically, he is a state park winter caretaker "in-training," explained Park Manager Mike Pelchat in an e-mail exchange. "Of course, Guy has been already been well trained by the Appalachian Mountain Club, working at AMC Highland Center

in Bretton Woods," Pelchat pointed out.

Jubinville worked seven years at the AMC lodge at the top of Crawford Notch, finishing his stint there in 2010.

"Guy was the seventh hiker to complete 'the grid' — hiking each of the 48 4,000-footers in each month of the calendar year to complete 48 x 12 = 576," Pelchat noted. "Guy's well at home in the mountains which is a good quality to have when working on the summit along with his training as an EMT/Firefighter with Twin Moun-

tain Fire & Rescue. He is also a team member of several search and rescue (SAR) teams including AMC, AVSAR and Pemi Valley SAR.

"Guy is a good man to have on duty when the inevitable emergencies arise on the mountain," Pelchat continued. "When not in crisis mode, he's using his wood-working skills to repair broken benches and signs and also refinishing the state park information desk." This is the kind of work that is far easier to accomplish during the Park's off-season, the park manager said.

"It's a great job, very interesting," said Guy in a Friday evening telephone interview. "Mike Pelchat has a great full-time crew, and I'm just learning various parts of the complex operation that managing the electrical power and buildings requires."

Jubinville said that it has been an odd year for snow; it was only after New Year's Day that the snowcat could go all the way from the base to the summit. He gratefully explained, "I couldn't do this job without the support of my life-partner, Josephine Cabral."

NCIC to help Balsams View identify, secure financing

Architect hired; name not disclosed

By Edith Tucker
etucker@salmonpress.com

DIXVILLE — Balsams View, LLC, selected the Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC), a nonprofit economic development organization serving the six northern counties in New Hampshire and Vermont, on Wednesday to take the lead in helping them develop and execute the financial package for the renovation of the Balsams Grand Resort Hotel.

"We regularly work with businesses to coordinate and participate in financing," explained NCIC president Jon Freeman in an e-mail exchange. "This particular



FILE PHOTO BY EDITH TUCKER

Renovations to the Balsams Grand Resort and Hotel are expected to take about 18 months from Jan. 20, allowing it possibly to reopen in time by the Fourth of July 2013.

arrangement is exciting since we will be able to have a broader role in helping the new owners — Daniel Dagesse and Daniel Herbert Jr. — restore this wonderful, historic landmark and restore critical North Country jobs in the process."

Colebrook natives Dagesse and Herbert set up Balsams View in early December 2011 in order to team up to buy the resort, including nearly 8,000 acres, most of which will be under a "working forest" conservation easement purchased by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests that prohibits most development.

The Balsams' last major renovations occurred more than 40 years ago and much work needs to be done. Balsams View LLC has

hired an architect, met with state agencies, and is moving swiftly to secure financing needed for renovations, according to a press release.

The resort's owners are not yet ready, however, to release the name of their first important hire: the architect they have selected. The Balsams is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; the resort — one of only five surviving grand hotels in the Granite State — topped the 2011 "Seven to Save" list promulgated by the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, that said it hoped the property's historic and cultural significance would be honored by a new owner, while jobs are preserved and its legacy continued.

The renovation process is expected to take approximately 18

months. The clock on that timeframe began ticking today, explained E.J. Powers, the owners' spokesman at the public relations firm Montagne Communications of Portsmouth, in an e-mail exchange. "There are a number of factors, however, that could influence the timetable," he said.

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Week 8 photo winner



The latest winner of our photo contest was Brandy Dreyer of Lancaster with this picture of a fox pup taking a look out of its den. There are still four more weeks to go in the contest so start snapping. For consideration in the contest send your photos to jbenon@salmonpress.com by Friday afternoon. Please provide info on who took the photo, where it was taken and what town the photographer is from. Each winner will be in the running for a gift card from a local business of his or her choice. Check out all the winners so far on our Berlin Reporter and Coos County Democrat Facebook pages.

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