

Celebrating 50 Years!



West Life: ONA 2009 General Excellence Award Winner



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The Award-Winning Westshore Weekly 75¢

No school building tax levy this fall

By Kevin Kelley

WESTLAKE

The Westlake Board of Education has decided against asking voters to fund the construction of a new high school and renovated middle school this November.

Board members came to a consensus on the issue at a meeting Monday.

Several board members had been skeptical of the wisdom of a ballot issue this fall due to the sluggish economy. The limited amount of time available to mount an effective campaign to convince homeowners to pay more taxes was also cited.

But the appeal of a November ballot issue grew in recent months when interest-free bonds became available to Ohio schools as part of the federal stimulus bill passed by Congress in February. The catch was that the bonds had to be distributed by the end of this year. If substantial savings was possible

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Tony Paskert, II, of Rocky River, drops into the Rocky River pool and instantly cools off. (West Life photo by Larry Bennet)

\$100K grant fires up COG study

By Danielle Toth

ROCKY RIVER

Officials from the Wests here Council of Governments learned Thursday they came in second place in a "get-out-the-vote" campaign through EfficiencyGovNow, a program that aims to create more efficient governments by providing as much as \$300,000 in funding to as many as three collaborative government projects from throughout Northeast Ohio.

COG will receive \$100,000 toward a study of a regional fire district for seven area cities - Bay Village, Fairview Park, Lakewood, North Olmsted, North Ridgeville, Rocky River and Westlake.

The money comes from the Fund for Our Economic Future, a collaboration of philanthropic organizations and individuals with the mission of strengthening the economic competitiveness of Northeast Ohio. The Fund for Our Economic Future launched EfficiencyGovNow in March.

"We're extremely happy and excited about getting the money," Bay Village mayor and COG chairwoman Debbie Sutherland said. "It's an excellent opportunity for us to collaborate in the Westshore and build on what we already do when we work together already. The study will give us a clearer picture of what we can do in terms of forming potential fire districts."

"All the Westshore mayors did a

great job in getting the word out to people to vote on this, and we clearly showed there is support for this type of concept in the area. I also want to thank (Bay Village fire) Chief Jim Sammon for working with the other departments and (Bay Village fire) Lt. Chris Lyons for writing a great grant proposal which clearly paid off."

Rocky River Mayor Pam Bobst was similarly enthusiastic about the grant.

"We're very excited," Bobst said.

"We're viewing this as the beginning of a Westshore fire district. It may not necessarily happen from this project, but we're going to look at what makes sense to collaborate on. We're looking

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Mall renovation plan moving forward

By Jeff Gallatin

NORTH OLMSTED

A multi-million dollar proposal for renovating the Westfield Great Northern Mall cleared another hurdle after the Board of Zoning Appeals approved variances for signs for the project.

Board members last Thursday approved a compromise measure on the proposal after about three-and-a-half hours of discussion on the proposal. When it was apparent some BZA members had specific concerns about the size and placement of different parts of the sign package, Evan Vlaeminck, the

corporate development manager for Westfield, asked for a five-minute recess so the mall officials could consider possible compromises.

Corporate and area Great Northern officials adjourned to the City Council caucus room to discuss possible options. After the recess, the mall officials altered the size of the "W" and other related portions of a Westfield sign.

They also dropped a sign below the roofline. Several BZA members had expressed major concerns about both issues in the discussion prior to the recess.

Vlaeminck later said the mall officials felt the need to make the compromises

and get the sign package approved.

"Compromises happen as part of negotiations," he said. "This is something that we could do to try and make this work."

In the proposal, mall officials will relocate the food court to the area outside Dick's sporting goods. In turn, a big-box store is slated to go onto the area where the current food court is. All the existing businesses and offices above the food court as well the eateries can go to other locations in the mall. Mall General Manager Kurt Reddick said the businesses have all

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