

ARG committed to supporting early childhood education

For the children of today and the future of the community, American Refining Group has committed to supporting early childhood education.

Early childhood education is a tool for economic development, now and in the future, said Robert Esch, vice president of external affairs at ARG and a member of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission.

"Children who get a quality early childhood education do so much better in school — academically, socially, mentally and physically — that they grow up to be well-adjusted, capable adults, the people of our future workforce," Esch said.

Unfortunately, in the Bradford community, there is an extensive gap between

what children deserve and what they actually get, he said. "The state's early childhood system is underfunded and lacks the facilities to address need."

Esch said nearly 80 percent of McKean County children under the age of five live in families considered economically at risk — whose household income is below 300 percent of the poverty level, about \$61,000 for a family of four. Of this 80 percent, only about half are served with quality publicly-funded early learning programs, he said.

"No matter what their circumstances, I always encourage my employees to make the sacrifices needed, if they can, to enroll their youngsters in high-quality early education

programs," Esch said. "It's not easy, but the benefits last a lifetime."

Children who participate in quality early learning programs do better academically and are likelier to graduate from high school and pursue higher education, Esch said. They are less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, less likely to commit a crime, and less likely to become pregnant before the age of 20.

They get better jobs and contribute to their local communities by paying taxes and through consumer spending, he said.

"The upshot is that every dollar invested in early learning saves \$16," Esch said. "In fact, an \$8,000 investment in young learners at birth yields a return

of \$800,000 over the child's life."

Esch said businesses that have been around for decades and centuries are accustomed to looking at return on investment from a long-term view.

ARG has devoted itself to four critical issues concerning quality of life in the region — education, health care, economic development and human services, Esch said. "All are intertwined, but education is the key that unlocks many doors.

"We have built relationships with many families, as three and four generations have devoted their lives to working with us," Esch said. "We owe a debt to this community, and we are committed to helping ensure that every child has access to quality early childhood education."



Era photo by Francie Long
Pam Nolder, owner of "Kross the Kreek Farm" on Olean Road, pets her one-year-old alpaca "Zaiden" at the farm on Tuesday. All told, Nolder has 11 animals which she raises at the farm. Nolder will be entering one of her alpacas in the McKean County SPCA pet calendar contest.

City Water Authority accepts timber bid

By RUTH BOGDAN
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The Bradford City Water Authority voted during Tuesday's meeting to accept a timber bid from Emporium Hardwoods for timber from authority property.

The company offered \$84,828 for 206,390 net board feet of marked sawtimber and 182 cords of pulpwood from Cobb Hollow. The bid opening was April 17, and Emporium Hardwoods' offer was the highest of eight bids.

Meanwhile, authority Executive Director Kim Benjamin said that on May 4 a two-inch water line in the Constitution Avenue Pump Station burst, flooding the station. Equipment including motors, pumps, electrical equipment, a radio and the computerized control system were sub-

merged, causing about \$15,000 in damage. An insurance claim will be filed, which Benjamin expects will cover the cost of the damage.

He said the station serves as a pressure booster for homes on Mill Drive and has been back in service since Monday. He noted that no one was without water because of the broken pipe, but some residences had lower water pressure.

Also at the meeting, the authority accepted a bid from J.D. Northrup Construction Inc. in Ellicottville, N.Y., to replace single-wall chemical storage tanks at the water treatment plant. They will be replaced with dual-wall tanks that are compliant with regulations by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Northrup's bid of \$159,500 was the lowest of three bids opened May 8. Benjamin noted that Bankson Engineer's

estimate for the project was \$350,000, so the bid was well below what was expected.

Benjamin then updated the board on other projects taking place at the water treatment plant.

He announced that a waste removal project in Lagoon #2 is complete. Commonwealth Disposal from Harrisburg took 12 days to clean about 5,000 cubic yards of waste material from the lagoon. The cost of the cleaning was \$270,000.

The design phase for an upgrade of eight filters at the plant is complete, and the project has moved to the permit phase in which the DEP is reviewing the permit submission.

Benjamin does not expect the permit to be issued until at least the fall, and he hopes the project will be bid in the late fall or winter.

Benjamin anticipates the

DEP will grant a permit for construction of an entrance road for a Gilbert Dam rehabilitation project. The rehab project had been moving along slowly, in part due to the number of wetlands and springs in the project area.

He believes a permit for the road will be issued in two to three weeks and the project will then be able to go to bid. He said that this August will mark two years since a grant was awarded for the project, and he believes it expires in July 2013. However, he anticipates a 12-month extension for the grant may be given.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation will soon begin a project at the Lewis Run Bridge which includes installing a new water main line in the stream. The line work will be completed by L.C. Whitford as per the authority's specifications.

Thompson backs letter urging expanded use of U.S. forest products

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Glenn Thompson, R-Pa., has sent a bipartisan letter to U.S. Green Building Council President and Chief Executive Officer Rick Fedrizzi urging changes to the treatment of forest products under the Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) 2012 rating system.

LEED, widely used by building owners and operators to certify their materials and operations are energy efficient and environmentally friendly, plans to release a revised rating system, LEED 2012, in November of this year.

The bipartisan letter, signed by Thompson and seven other members of Congress repre-

senting districts with significant rural or forestry interests, urges the Council to "accept all credible forest management certification systems for qualification under the LEED rating system," in order to incentivize the utilization of domestically produced forest products.

Thompson's Congressional district includes the Allegheny National Forest.

LEED's current rating system recognizes wood only if it is certified to the Forest Stewardship Council's forest standard. However, three quarters of the domestically certified forests operate on different standards, primarily the Sustainable Forestry Initiative or the American Tree Farm

System, which are not recognized by LEED.

As a result, LEED's rating requirement has the adverse effect of dissuading builders from using U.S.-made wood products that are ineligible for LEED certification, despite their substantial environmental and economic benefits.

A recent study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture released in September of 2011 outlines scientific findings that support the environmental and economic benefits of using wood in green building construction. The report further states that sustainability of forest products can be verified using any credible third-

party rating system, such as Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council or American Tree Farm System.

If the Council changes its standard, it would qualify more than 4.5 million acres of wood from Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the American Tree Farm System in Pennsylvania alone for LEED certification. Nationally, the number of acres certified to those programs is almost 87 million acres.

Jones facing new drug charges

By MARTHA KNIGHT
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SMETHPORT — Sara Jones, 23, of Port Allegany, remains in McKean County Jail after being arraigned last week by Magisterial District Judge Bill Todd on three additional charges related to alleged methamphetamine production and sales.

Two additional felony charges allege manufacture, delivery or possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance. The other new charge alleges possession of a controlled substance, as a misdemeanor.

All three additional charges are based on a complaint by McKean County Detective Ryan Yingling, as had been the previous complaint that had been lodged against Jones. The earlier complaint stemmed from the late afternoon, March 14 raid of a house at 63 S. Main St., Port Allegany, by members of a Pennsylvania State Police mobile team wearing protective gear. They executed a no-knock warrant at the time of a controlled buy made by a confidential informant.

The most recent charges relate to an earlier controlled buy alleged to have been made by the same confidential informant on March 11.

Todd set Jones' bail at \$5,000 cash, for the three additional charges. She remains in jail in lieu of \$200,000 cash bail on the earlier charges.

In the charges based on the raid, Jones is accused of manufacture of a controlled substance, possession of precursors used for meth manu-

St. Bernard students, staff to assist in placement of American flags in cemetery

In observance of Memorial Day, Denise O'Neil will lead St. Bernard Elementary and Middle School students in the third, fourth and fifth grades as they assist American Legion Post #108 in placing American flags on the graves of fallen soldiers in St. Bernard Cemetery on Thursday.

The students will start at 12:30 p.m. and finish at 2 p.m.

Ridgway Borough Council reviews water sales agreement

RIDGWAY — Ridgway Borough Council has reviewed a recommendation from a committee to not enter into a water sales agreement with Hunt Marcellus Operating Co.

The recommendation came from the water, sewer, refuse and street committee.

Committee member John Casolo Jr. said that Hunt Marcellus Operating Co. representatives Mark Wagley and Doug Proffitt provided information concerning the present and future demand for water drilling and gas well fracking.

In touching on the main topics of the meeting, Casolo said gas well development is slowing down due to the low commodity prices for natural gas, meaning the demand for water is slated to be lower in the short term; the state Department of Environmental Protection requires contracts between a

O'Neil, a 32-year veteran teacher at St. Bernard, along with her father, Clair D. Butler, Adjutant of American Legion Post #108, will set out to mark close to 1,300 graves in St. Bernard Cemetery. Butler is a Korean War veteran, serving from 1952 to 1954 and has teamed up with the young students for three years.

"Being able to include the

students in this commemorative and civic exercise is a real life illustration of what service for others means. Why our freedom is so precious. It also enables me personally, to recognize the service of my own father, which continues through activities like this," said O'Neil, adding that Commander Donald McClelland of Post #108 assisted with making the project possible.

To finish the year, on June 4, students in grades 3-5 will visit the Buffalo (N.Y.) and Erie County Naval and Military Park to continue their focus on the remembrance of veterans and the freedoms we have as citizens of the United States.

For additional information, contact Kristen Luther, advancement director at luther@stbernardschool.net or by calling the school.

Man in stable condition after Niagara Falls plunge

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. (AP) — A man who survived a plunge of at least 180 feet over Niagara Falls — only the third person known to have done so without a safety device — was in stable condition Tuesday, a day after his apparent suicide attempt that led to a dramatic and painstaking rescue.

On a warm and sunny Victoria Day holiday morning in Canada, the man climbed over a railing 20 to 30 feet out over the Horseshoe Falls, the tallest of the three main falls,

and "deliberately jumped" into the Niagara River, according to witness accounts given to Niagara Parks Police.

Seriously injured, he surfaced in the lower river basin near an observation platform and managed to make it to shore on his own, likely swept there by an eddy, said Platoon Chief Dan Orescanin of the Niagara Falls, Ontario, Fire Department.

"That's another stroke of luck," Orescanin said. "If he was in the main current, he would have been swept down river."

**City of Bradford Offices
24 Kennedy St & OECD Offices
20 Russell Blvd.
Will Be Closed On
MEMORIAL DAY
MONDAY, MAY 28, 2012
REFUSE & RECYCLING COLLECTION
Normally picked up on Monday
will be picked up on Tuesday.
Refuse and recycling pick up will
begin early, so please place your
refuse and recycling at the curb
the night before.
Have A Safe Holiday!**