

Nearly \$10 Million Clears Hurdles For Flood Control

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times and The Westfield Leader

A long-running struggle to get Federal funding for the proposed Green Brook Flood Control project affecting parts of Union County, resulted in a \$9.9 million appropriation as part of an Energy and Water bill up for vote in the United States Congress within the next two weeks.

Spokeswoman for Congressman Bob Franks (R-7th District) Janet Thompson explained, "It should easily pass the Senate and House, since it came out of conference committee."

The House of Representatives initially proposed \$12 million towards the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project for the fiscal year beginning in October, while the Senate sought \$7.5 million. The conference committee — made up of members of both houses of Congress — hammered out the final dollar amount of the appropriation.

"We only need one more thing for approval," according to Chairman of the Green Brook Flood Control Commission Vernon A. Noble said, "and that's the President's signature."

A president has 45 days to act after both houses okay a bill.

The \$331 million flood control project first came about after severe storms flooded the Green Brook basin — including Scotch Plains Township — almost 25 years ago, causing thousands of dollars worth of damage and taking six lives. Eleven succeeding storms have caused \$2.4 billion in additional damage throughout the region, according to Congressman Franks.

The Commission, formed shortly after the 1973 flooding, has worked closely with the Army Corps in the plan to widen river channels, reinforce levees, build flood walls and detention basins in order to mitigate flooding downstream of the Watchung Mountains.

A special task force of the Commission revealed this month that it located alternate sites in the Borough of Watchung for two disputed storm water catch basins that were originally planned for parts of Scotch Plains and Berkeley Heights. Federal funding for the basins was dropped last year after some Union County officials and residents objected to the proposed basins.

Berkeley Heights residents in particular have nixed any compromise on the need for basins and the Connell Company, located in Westfield, has opposed them as well, claiming it will affect property they are developing near the sites.

The new basin sites, farther downstream in the Watchung Mountains

gorge, would result in a re-routing of New Providence Road, according to the task force. Another basin would sit in a northern corner of a quarry owned by Weldon Materials Inc., in Watchung.

Mr. Noble said, "I'm very happy, very pleased," with the prospect of nearly \$10 million to begin construction on the first phase of flood control in the region.

Free Market Electric Will Lower Costs; Lawmakers Debate

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times and The Westfield Leader

Both houses of the New Jersey State Legislature introduced bills this month into committee that would deregulate the electric supply industry by June of next year if approved. The gas industry would be competitive by December of next year.

Deregulation could mean an estimated five to 10 percent reduction in electric costs for residents and consumers, according to the state Board of Public Utilities (BPU.) Some discounts could go as high as 16 percent.

A spokeswoman for state Senate offices, Rae Hutton, said the legislation would probably be debated throughout the fall with a vote possible by the end of the year.

"It's a pretty big bill," Mrs. Hutton said, "and it's very early in the process."

Assemblyman Richard H. Bagger of Westfield, representing the 22nd District which includes Westfield, Mountainside, Scotch Plains and Fanwood, is one of the prime cosponsors of a similar bill in the state Assembly.

According to most, the bills are designed to be good for consumers, although Mrs. Hutton said some groups have opposed the measure.

Under certain circumstances, the cost reductions may be phased in by electric suppliers over two years, according to the BPU.

The BPU testified before the Senate Committee on Economic Growth last week, she said.

"Our process has been long and arduous, in part because we sought to include as many citizen, business, government and industry groups as possible in drafting this bill," ac-

Planning Board Okays One-Story Building

By BOBBIE BALDASSARI TURSI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Two businesses presented appeals for variances last Wednesday before the Scotch Plains Planning Board, which reviewed how each company's proposal would fit in with the surrounding community.

Dr. Robert J. Fallon, the owner of ChiroMed Rehabilitation, met with the Site Plan Review Committee to discuss the proposed enlargement of an existing sign above his office at 1949 Westfield Avenue.

Initially, Dr. Fallon had requested a five-foot high sign to display the name of his practice and the types of treatment offered. The sign would be internally-illuminated at night.

He was agreeable, however, to the board's recommendation that a four-foot sign be installed instead. The applicant concurred with board members that this change would not disturb the width and placement of the wording on the sign.

Dr. Fallon said he intends to work with an artist on plans for a sign which will fit the board's recommendations. Contingent upon this one condition, the board approved the variance.

Although the physician was awarded his variance, one board member voiced disapproval of the proposal, saying it "looks like a billboard."

In other business, the board heard testimony from several witnesses concerning a petition by Frank Flanagan, principal owner of Flanagan Construction of Green Brook, to build a one-story building at 2390 Waldheim Avenue, off of Plainfield Avenue.

Mr. Flanagan plans to raze an existing single-family home on the property, which is located in an industrial zone. It would be replaced with what he described as a masonry facility for the storage of small tools and materials, with minimal office space.

He said he plans to lease space to small contractors such as plumbers, carpenters or electricians.

The flat-roofed building would have an earth-tone facade made of split face block. It will have dual entrances and eight parking spaces (two for each tenant) at the front of the building.

In addition to the applicant, testimony was given by his attorney, Lawrence Vastola, and licensed project engineer Paul Fisk from Fisk Associates in Middlesex.

There will be no windows, doors or parking area in the back of the proposed building, according to the witnesses, who likened it to a backyard with grass. They said no activity would take place there.

In addition, they maintained that the only activity in the front of the building would involve tenants and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Deerfield Pupils Achieve Above Average Scores, School Board Reveals

KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

At the opening of Monday night's Mountainside Board of Education meeting, John Perrin was sworn in as the newest member of the board.

Mr. Perrin, a 20-year resident of Mountainside, is an architect for The Henderson Design Firm in Somerville, and has been an active member of the borough's Strategic Planning Committee since February. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have two daughters who attend Deerfield Elementary School. His youngest daughter attends a nearby pre-school.

In other business, board member Pat Knodel, who acted as the chief negotiator between the Mountainside Education Association and the Mountainside school board, reported on agreements that were made on contracts effective from July 1, 1998 to June 30, 2001.

Mrs. Knodel revealed that there was a 4 percent increase for first-year teachers, and also pointed out that this was the first time a three-year contract was ever negotiated.

She added that teachers would now start their day at 8:15 a.m. instead of 8:30 a.m., and benefits would only be available to those employees who work 25 hours or more per week, instead of the 20 hours that was mandated in the past.

In other business, the Borough's Chief School Administrator, Dr. Gerard Schaller, with the help of Guidance Counselor Barbara Komoroski, reported the results of the IOWA Test of Basic Skills that was administered in April of last year. This test, given by the State of

New Jersey, is done annually at each grade level, starting with grade 2.

According to Dr. Schaller, the tests help to provide a comprehensive measurement of growth in a number of areas, including vocabulary, reading, spelling, capitalization, work-study skills, and mathematics concepts, problems and computation.

The composite test results, handed to members of the audience in the form of a report, revealed that the average scores of students in grades 2 to 8 fall between the 89 to 99 percentile for their grade level.

According to this same handout, Mountainside students continue to show high achievements in all areas.

Deerfield's Assistant Principal Michael Sutcliffe then reported the results of the Early Warning Tests (EWT) that were administered last March to all eighth graders.

According to Mr. Sutcliffe, these tests are given to determine if any students need instructional intervention in reading, mathematics and/or writing.

According to Mr. Sutcliffe, the EWT is also designed to indicate progress students are making to learn the skills needed to pass their High School Proficiency Test in Grade 11.

The test results showed Deerfield students scored above the state standards in reading. In addition, 39 out of 41 scored above the state standards in mathematics, and all but two students scored above the state standards in writing.

Board President Pat Taeschler commented that she wanted to see a survey completed by the first year high school students to measure how well prepared they were for the transition into the high school.

She said that this would make a more complete picture, in addition to testing, to see if students received all the tools necessary to move on to the higher grades.

Dr. Schaller agreed, but suggested that a survey be completed two times per year, in the fall and spring, for example, to compare results after students adjusted to high school life.

Finally, a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee is scheduled for Saturday, November 7, at 8:30 a.m. at Deerfield School.

The 30 volunteers who make up the Strategic Planning Committee include administrators, faculty, board members, students and members of the public. On the agenda is the presentation of an action plan that will highlight goals and objectives.

Veterans are Invited To Meeting on Oct. 7 At American Legion

WESTFIELD — Martin Wallberg Post No. 3 of the American Legion has invited all eligible veterans to its monthly meeting on Wednesday, October 7, beginning at 8 p.m.

The meeting will take place at the post home at 1003 North Avenue, West, in Westfield. Guest speaker Zack Roberts, a former prisoner of war, will present a talk and slide show about prisoners of war.

For further information, please call (908) 233-2477 or (908) 233-5705.

FOLD

ROSE SQUARED
3X10½

JUNIOR LEAQUE
3X10½