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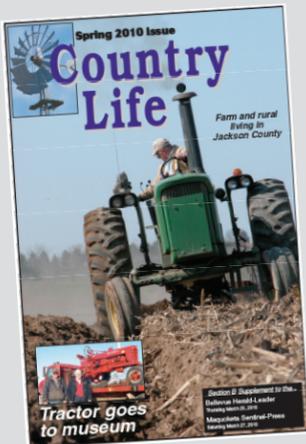
— M A Q U O K E T A —

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Spring 2010 Country Life



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SUPPLEMENTS

■ Eastern Iowa Bizzzy Bee

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Due to a varying number of supplements purchased by our advertising customers for insertion in *The Maquoketa Sentinel-Press*, subscribers in some areas may not receive all the supplements listed.

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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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Teachers retain positions

Early retirement of some MCSD teachers helps balance proposed budget

By KELLY GERLACH

The Maquoketa Community School Board plans to shave \$646,600 from next year's budget without laying off teachers. That's good news for district employees.

The board met Monday, March 22, in regular session and one of the agenda items was last-minute revisions to proposed budget and staffing reductions in the Maquoketa Community School District.

The district saved more dollars due to attrition thanks to three additional teachers who applied for early retirement when the board reopened that voluntary program. Margo Sprenger, middle school science teacher, Ron Baker, middle school physical education teacher, and Brenda Snyder, second grade teacher, all decided to re-

tire early. This will save the district an estimated \$197,000.

Several other vacancies will not be filled next year, including one secretarial position at both Cardinal and Briggs elementary schools. This decision also affected district Superintendent Kim Huckstadt's recommendation not to cut a nursing position, which could have equaled another \$35,000 savings.

"At the elementaries, we're going from two to one building secretary. They're not nurses but they're usually the ones to step in and decide how to handle a situation (in absence of a nurse)," the superintendent said. "We should try looking to maintain nursing staff as is."

If all of the superintendent's recommendations are approved, some staff will lose extra

duty contracts. These would include building technology lead positions in the district, a savings of \$8,000. The district last year hired another technology support person to maintain ever-increasing technology needs, so no loss of service would occur.

Each of the following sports would lose one assistant coach: football, volleyball, boys basketball, girls basketball, baseball and softball.

For safety and liability reasons, board member Brian Tabor said he would not consider eliminating an assistant wrestling coach. Tabor noted that the wrestling program was not included when additional assistant coaches were added to the athletic programs a few years ago. He explained that unlike team sports, multiple wrestlers are often on different mats at the same time, thus requiring more supervision.

Athletic Director Tracy Wilkins said the district currently sits in the middle of the conference as far as the number of assistant coaches is concerned.

"These are still huge reductions, don't get me wrong," Huckstadt said. "It's going to cause us to have to change and adapt. If there's any good news tonight, it's that if we target that (\$646,600) range, we won't have to do significant layoffs."

Initial reduction recommendations had included laying off the juvenile liaison officer, one school nurse and up to three special education positions. Those reductions will not have to be made this year. The superintendent cautioned that the three special education positions are currently funded by grant dollars that will not be available next year, putting those positions in a precarious position for the 2011-12 school year.

Huckstadt said he felt confident with the proposed budget and staff reductions and that he was happy with the progress the board had made.

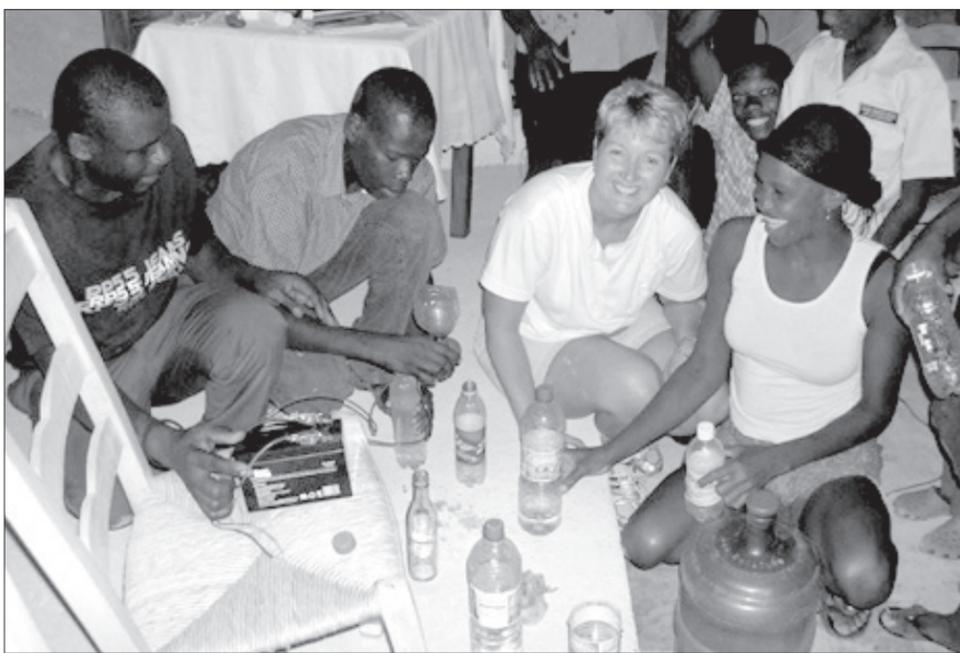
School board members officially vote on the proposed recommendations at the board's April 12 meeting.

In other board news:

■ School board members approved a proposed property tax levy rate that would raise the tax rate by about 28 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation.

The proposed budget for the 2011 fiscal year

■ **SCHOOL,**
Please turn to page 13



Framm to speak about water needs

Hays Pure Water for All Foundation, a non-profit international service organization, is working to provide low tech, low cost water purification technology to developing areas. Tracy Framm, center, rural Miles farm woman, will speak at 1 p.m. Sunday, March 28, at the Hurstville Interpretive Center on the project, the technology and her experience in Africa helping introduce and implement the water purification program. More children die from water borne disease than are killed by war around the world.

Whole grade sharing is center stage

Andrew School Board, parents hear state official explain how procedure works

By LOWELL CARLSON

The questions at Monday (March 15) evening's public meeting at Andrew Community School reflected the concerns parents have about their children's education options.

The answers came from an Iowa Department of Education official who has heard many of the concerns before.

Del Hoover, Deputy Administrator, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines, walked the audience through options available to districts at the crossroad.

With Hoover, facing the audience, were members of the Andrew District Board of Education and Superintendent Kent Hammer.

Andrew is not alone, Hoover told the audience. A number of Iowa districts are facing similar challenges.

Hoover explained the process of whole grade

sharing, noting it is not seen as a long-term remedy to falling enrollment and declining revenue. Iowa's student enrollment peaked in 1973 and for most rural districts has been on a downward trajectory ever since.

Hoping for a new factory, an influx of open enrollment students is not likely to happen. Still, Hoover said there are a few urban districts, especially clustered around greater Des Moines where facilities can't go up fast enough to accommodate the growth.

The state official responded to questions including accreditation, eligibility for sports, open enrollment and state funding impacts.

Hoover said the benchmark of 300 students is critical. Andrew slipped just below that number recently. He commended the district for facing the challenge. Andrew now has 15 high school classes in which five or fewer students are en-

rolled.

Two neighboring districts, Maquoketa and Bellevue, were overwhelmingly preferred by respondents to a survey sent out by Andrew School Districts. The survey had a 52 percent return rate, very high for surveys.

At Monday evening's session there were questions from parents about those preferences. Hoover believes the district will likely have to allocate neighboring schools based on location. Hammer, however, said conversations with other districts now whole grade sharing indicated there was no boundary defining who went where.

Following the public information session in the school gymnasium the board went into its regular session at 9 p.m. to discuss whole grade sharing and other issues.