



SERVING THE WESTERN MOUNTAINS OF MAINE WHERE THE KIDS GROW STRAIGHT AND TALL AND THE WOMEN ARE ALL GOOD LOOKING.

## Fire damages medical arts center

By Ann Bryant  
 Special to the Irregular

FARMINGTON — A fire in the attic of Franklin Health Medical Arts Center early Saturday morning, Jan. 30 caused more than \$1 million in damages and brought 92 firefighters from seven towns out in subzero temperatures, authorities said.

The 58,000-square-foot building, connected by a long hallway to Franklin Memorial Hospital, opened in 2008 and houses five medical practices.

Farmington Fire and Rescue was called at 5:57 a.m. Saturday for a report of a fire in the attic, Deputy Chief Clyde Ross said. The building sustained extensive damage to the attic and trusses, mostly in the wing housing the

urology, general surgery and pediatrics offices, Ross said.

The cause of the fire was under investigation Saturday by a State Fire Marshal investigator.

“The fire does not impact Franklin Memorial Hospital operations and an evacuation was not necessary,” FMH President and CEO Rebecca Ryder said in a prepared statement.

Heavy smoke could be seen escaping from holes punched in the roof to vent the smoke, but firefighters battled flames inside the attic,

*A hotline number, 779-2163, has been created for Franklin Health Medical Arts Center patients to check on the status of their appointments this week.*

Ross said.

Water ran from the attic to the basement, causing extensive damage, Ross said. The

— Please see **Fire** on page 23

## Avon, Phillips move towards agreement

By David Hart  
 Irregular Staff

PHILLIPS — Town Manager Jim Collins announced that there’s an upcoming special selectman’s meeting set for Feb. 5 at 6 p.m. to discuss the ongoing issue between Phillips and Avon regarding the transfer station and fire protection service interlocal agreement.

Avon, which uses the Phillips transfer station and fire protection services, and Phillips which invoices Avon for those services, encountered a disagreement based on a third quarter invoice.

Phillips invoiced for a specific amount and Avon paid a lesser amount, which triggered several emails and failed meetings. Putting the past behind them, the end result is that both town boards want to work through the conflict and develop a better, clearer and fair agreement.

At a past Phillips selectmen’s meeting, it was agreed to have selectman John Stinchfield and Avon Selectman Bob Ellis meet and try to work through a new formula and understanding of their interlocal agreement.

The two board members did meet and an agreement is now before the Phillips Selectmen for consideration.

Last Tuesday the Phillips board met and saw firsthand what’s on the table, but decided to not take action until the financials were fully examined, Collins said. Phillips selectman Steve Charles requested that they table the issue until they had enough time to review the financials, according to Collins.

“I do believe we are making forward progress. We did not vote because we

Please see **Agreement** on page 27

## Budget appears stable in Eustis

By David Hart  
 Irregular Staff

EUSTIS — The selectmen in Eustis are nearing completion of the 2010 budget on which residents will vote the first Saturday morning in March.

Selectman Jay Wyman said last week that, overall, it appears that they’re right in line with where they were last year. However, county and MSAD #58 school budget figures have yet to be determined.

“So far so good,” Wyman said. “If the municipal budget is up, it’s only a little bit,” he added.

The winter roads account will see a \$30,000 difference from the \$150,000 that was appropriated in 2009. This could signify the largest savings in appropriations from the previous year.

A \$2,000 surplus has also lowered the appropriation to \$25,000 for municipal

buildings. No money is recommended for Blanchard Park which saw a \$1,000 appropriation last year. Little league is also down to \$500 from the \$1,000 request last year. The town street light fund is also down \$500.

The Recreation Department’s youth program request is, however, up \$1,250 to a \$20,000 request for 2010. Five hundred dollars was also added for Memorial Flags. A Red Cross request was recommended by selectmen up \$2 to \$689. And \$1,000 was added for General Assistance which does not show as an appropriation last year.

The cost for ambulance service is also up \$625 to \$39,700 and insurance has hiked \$4,000 to a budgeted \$32,000.

Under Allowable Deductions, selectmen have agreed to take \$50,000 from surplus

— Please see **Eustis** on page 27



## Bob Dodge Night at MTA

Jim Williamson of Kingfield is greeted by Mt. Abram Booster Club representative Carrie Abbott who presented him with the Bob Dodge Award in between Mt. Abram and Carrabec basketball games last Tuesday, Jan. 26. Williamson has proven to be a dedicated fan of MTA basketball, soccer, baseball and all middle school sports. Both the MTA girls’ and boys’ varsity teams applauded and showed their appreciation with a handshake. His name will be engraved on a plaque which can be viewed at Mt. Abram’s front alcove. It was also announced that Williamson will receive a free lifetime pass for all sporting events at Mt. Abram. Bob Dodge was a true enthusiast of the game of basketball; an outstanding coach; an athletic director for almost 30 years and a loyal and dedicated sports fan. Dodge spent countless hours volunteering his time working with young athletes, improving sports fields and advising the Mt. Abram staff. His presence has been greatly missed at Mt. Abram High School.

(David Hart photo)

## MSAD #58

### Clark optimistic about consolidation

By David Hart  
 Irregular Staff

MSAD #58 — Superintendent Quenten Clark spent a couple of days in Augusta last week testifying before the Education Committee in a public hearing; he also attended a workshop later in the week.

Rep. Thomas Saviello and Jarrod Crockett cosponsored a bill to allow Coplin and Highland plantations to consolidate with MSAD #58. Clark and the two legislators wanted to see if this plan satisfied the re-organizational laws even though the minimum student enrollment would not be achieved.

Clark has said that they’ve run out of options for possible consolidation partners and legislative action is required.

There was also language in the bill to consider having MSAD #58’s central office administrate either its own unorganized territory students, UT students from Franklin County or even the entire state. If the later is considered, it could eliminate up to five positions at the state level where currently the UT is administered.

“There is a general interest in doing something different with the UT,” Clark said. “I am however quite confident that they’ll do something in Highland and Coplin,” he said.

Clark explained that after hearing from several other districts which had similar and not so similar problems, the committee decided to table the bill.

“The committee has decided that they have a whole lot of problems and they’re looking for a single source solution to fix them all,” Clark explained.

Clark said they truly recognize that there are real problems out there and that they need to fix them. “They are looking for a blanket solution to fix them all.”

Lorrie Arruda, Coplin superintendent and Brenda Stevens, Highland’s superintendent also testified at the hearing.

“I feel good about what is happening and really got a sense that they’re listening and not just blowing us off,” Clark said. “The process is actually working for us at this time. They’re really stepping up and taking control of the process.”