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New company interested in looking at Coos Loop

North Country Transmission Commission agrees on consultant

By **BARBARA TETREALT**

THE BERLIN DAILY SUN

CONCORD — While the North Country Transmission Commission moves ahead with hiring a consultant to develop a plan to pay for upgrading the Coos loop, an independent transmission company is taking a look at the loop.

Stephen Conant, senior vice president of Anbaric Transmission, said his company is interested in the Coos County transmission system.

"We are an independent company and so we look outside the box of what's typical and we're willing to invest some resources to take a second look (at the Coos loop) which I think is healthy for everybody," he said.

The committee has agreed on a consultant or consulting firm to look at options for funding a new 230-kV line that would accommodate the 400 megawatts

of renewable power that can not be handled by the existing 115-kV line owed by Public Service of N.H. PSNH has estimated it will cost about \$150 million to build the new line.

The existing Coos loop runs between Northumberland, Stark, Milan, Berlin, Gorham, Whitefield, and Lancaster. The RFP calls for the new line to run parallel to the existing line. The maximum capacity of the new line was set at 400 megawatts because the transmission system south of the North Country try see **COOS LOOP** page 9

Council reviews community service division budgets

Another packed agenda for work session

By **BARBARA TETREALT**

THE BERLIN DAILY SUN

BERLIN — Long meetings are becoming the norm for the city council on Monday nights as budget reviews add to the regular work load.

This week, the council reviewed the budgets of the four departments that make up the community

service division - health, welfare, library, and recreation.

Also on the agenda was approval of assessing contracts, fire department fees, sale of tax delinquent properties, a request to rent city hall, and several other items.

On top of the public agenda, the council met in non-public with school officials and union representatives on collective bargaining and later with Hous-

ing Coordinator André Caron on a land matter.

With department heads asked to level fund their budgets for the third year in a row, the council finds itself facing difficult choices on staff levels and levels of services.

City Manager Patrick MacQueen said he asked Community Services Director Laura Viger to cut her \$532,000 health budget another \$100,000 because see **COUNCIL** page 7



This photo, entitled Heron's Fire 4 by Franklin LaFerriere of Berlin, is one of the many works by North Country artists to be featured in the Northern Light: Variations on a Theme, an exhibit in the Johnson Sisters Library at the AVA Gallery in Lebanon. The exhibit will run April 1 through May 8. (See story page 9)

Selectmen authorize purchase of new fire truck

By **CRAIG LYONS**

THE BERLIN DAILY SUN

GORHAM — The Gorham Board of Selectmen voted to approve the purchase of a new fire truck Monday night, using funds from a capital reserve account and grant money.

The board authorized the town to spend \$175,704 to purchase a 2009 fire truck to replace Engine 4, which the town purchased in 1975. Chief Rick Eichler said he was able to get \$55,000 in grant money to lower the amount the town would need to remove from the capital reserve fund. The town will use \$120,704 from the fire truck capital reserve fund, leaving about 10,000 left in the account.

The town was scheduled to purchase a replacement for Engine 4 in 2010, according to the town's 10-year plan.

"It's a good truck, but it's having some issues," said Rick Eichler.

Initially, he said he started looking at used trucks, but when he got some grant funds from the United States Department of Agriculture, the town would wind up being able to purchase see **PURCHASE** page 19

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Northern NH artists featured at AVA Gallery

LEBANON — More than two dozen works created by northern New Hampshire artists are featured in Northern Light: Variations on a Theme, an exhibit in the Johnson Sisters Library at the AVA Gallery in Lebanon. The show opens with a reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on Friday, April 9, and runs through May 8.

The Northern Light exhibit is a collaboration of the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire, AVA, Camerata New England, and the Gallery at the Old Mill Studio, Whitefield. It was developed in conjunction with two concerts by the Camerata New England chamber ensemble, on Friday, April 23, at 7:30 p.m. at the Lebanon Opera House, and on Saturday, April 24, at 7 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church in Colebrook.

"We are delighted by this opportunity to send art representing our region to another part of the state," says Sue Gradual of the Old Mill Studio. "It's a significant chance to show others the great talent flourishing in northern New Hampshire."

The show includes pieces by 28 artists from Columbia to Campton to the Mount Washington Valley. Berlin-Gorham area artists featured in the juried show include Franklin LaFerre and Ron Edward of Berlin, Randy Ayer of Milan, Roberta Arbre, Tim

Sappington and Mary Gail Scott of Randolph, Carla Broman and Bill Scoelore of Gorham, and several artists from the Mount Washington Valley. Works include paintings in oils, pastels, acrylic, pen and ink, and watercolor, as well as photographs, jewelry, a beaded bag, and a kaleidoscope. Sarah Chaffee of the McGowan Fine Art gallery in Concord was the juror for the show.

At the conclusion of the exhibit at the AVA Gallery, the show will continue at the Fiddleheads gallery in Colebrook from May 15-June 5, with an opening reception on Friday, May 14, from 5-8 p.m.

The Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire is a network working to promote, support and sustain culture, heritage and the arts throughout northern New Hampshire. "We are always looking for opportunities to promote the work of local artists," says Eileen Alexander, Arts Alliance Assistant Director. "This show allows us to do that by bringing together work from across the region, and taking it to new arts audiences."

Anyone needing more information can call Eileen at 837-2275 or Sue at 837-8778.

The AVA Gallery is located at 11 Bank Street, Lebanon. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

COOS LOOP from page one could not handle additional megawatts without upgrades.

Conant said one option his company wants to explore is running a spur off the proposed new line from Gorham to the Central Maine Power substation in Rumford, Maine. Another option is using larger lines. Conant stressed his company's ideas are very preliminary.

"Electric transmission systems are very complex," he noted. He said the goal is to increase the capacity of the new line to as much as 700 megawatts. He said there are renewable energy projects that are not going forward because of the transmission problem.

"What do you have to do to maximize the amount of energy you can get out of there," he said.

In the end, Conant said his company could come to the same conclusion about a new 230-kV line as PSNH. But he said the region would have the advantage of having a second pair of eyes look at the problem and options.

Asked about funding the line, Conant said he thought the committee's mandate to look at ways to spread or socialize the cost was the way to go.

Conant said his company is undertaking its own studies on the Coos loop but it is also interested in submitting an application to ISO-New England to have an economic study performed on the feasibility of its ideas. ISO-NE, the nonprofit entity that oversees the entire electric generation and transmission system in New England, funds three studies a year.

The North Country Transmission Commission voted to send a letter supporting Anbaric's request. If Anbaric's proposal is selected, Conant said the study would get underway July 1.

Anbaric Transmission is currently involved in developing a high voltage underwater electric

cable from Wiscasset, Maine to Boston. It also built and financed a high voltage DC line between New Jersey and Long Island. Privately-held, Anbaric describes itself as specializing in the "development of innovative transmission projects that fall outside the traditional scope of investor owned utilities".

At its meeting last Friday, the commission voted to accept the recommendation of its subcommittee on a consultant. The name, however, will not be released until the signed contract lands on the executive council agenda. It is scheduled to go to the executive council at its April 28 meeting so the name should be public in late April.

The Request for Proposals generated six applications. The subcommittee narrowed the six to three finalists. Committee Chair state Senator Martha Fuller Clark said the subcommittee developed a score sheet and set up a five-person interview team.

Based on the interviews and scoring, the subcommittee recommended a final candidate to the full committee.

"I think it was a structured process," said Clark.

The full committee met Friday in nonpublic session to discuss the choice. Clark described the discussion as "very rich and helpful" and said there were a lot of questions asked about the recommended choice and the other applicants. In the end, she said a majority voted to go with the subcommittee's recommendation. Final approval rests with the executive council.

According to the request for proposals, the consultant will be charged with recommending options and developing an action plan and method to pay for upgrading the Coos transmission system. The final report from the consultant is due Dec. 1.

The \$200,000 funding for the study comes American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

TROOP F from page 8

to a motor vehicle accident on Route 2 in Shelburne. Jared Alessandrini, 29, of New York, was traveling west at a speed that was too fast for the road conditions and lost control of his vehicle. The vehicle skidded, flipped over and ended up on its roof. No one was injured but the vehicle had to be towed from the scene.

March 25

1 p.m. — State Police notified that a record check of a person attempting to purchase a fi firearm in Errol had shown the person was not eligible to

possess fi firearms. This matter is being investigated to determine if any laws were broken.

1 p.m. — State Police were notified that the record check of a second person attempting to purchase a fi firearm from a store in Errol had shown that the person was not eligible to possess a firearm. This matter is being investigated.

7:42 p.m. — State Police responded to a report of a burglary in Columbia. The residence was entered, items stolen and damage done to the home. The incident remains under investigation.

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