



WHO WILL START?

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The LEADER

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High oil costs curb road work

BY MARY PERHAM
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BATH | The high price of oil is being blamed for knocking two projects off the Steuben County Public Works schedule, with other projects on hold or scaled back.

County Public Works Commissioner Vincent Spagnoletti

said the cost of blacktop has increased by 50 percent since January, with asphalt prices doubling since the beginning of the year.

Spagnoletti said the county will pay \$3.9 million for blacktop projects originally estimated at \$2.6 million, and \$3.5 million for asphalt work priced early this year at \$1.9 million.

The escalating costs mean the county will not work on county Road 67 in Hornellsville this year, and put off black topping the shoulders on Spencer Hill Road in Corning until next year, Spagnoletti said.

Crews have already finished improving the sight distance on a dangerous curve on Spencer Hill, he said.

Chip seal projects have been reduced from 35 miles to 27 miles, and scheduled work on county Route 41 in the towns of Caton and Hornby is on hold, he said.

"I have to say, without the extra county funding and (state) money we would be in big trouble by now," Spagnoletti told the county

Legislature's Public Works Committee Tuesday.

The county boosted the department's budget this year by \$1.5 million to fix and maintain more county roads. Budget restrictions since 2001, due largely to state-mandated programs, resulted in a reduction in public works projects in recent years.

With the additional money, the county had planned an ambitious summer, with blacktop slated for 31 miles of roads, and repair and maintenance planned on 65 miles of county roads.

But with oil prices climbing, the department began in June

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A blast from the past: Group fires up wood furnace

BY DERRICK EK
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Reviving techniques that date back many centuries, students and faculty in the ceramics program at Corning Community College hosted glassblowers from the Corning Museum of Glass on Tuesday afternoon for some wood-powered experiments with clay and glass.

The informal group used a wood-burning furnace, fueled by hunks of pine donated by a local tree removal company. Designed and built out of bricks over the past few months by Fred Herbst, a ceramics instructor at CCC, it sits under a pavilion behind the college's ceramics studio.

Wood was used by glassblowers for thousands of years, until it was replaced by other heat sources such as coal, gas and electricity, explained CMoG's Steve Gibbs. It's pretty much the same story with ceramics, Herbst added.

And while using a wood furnace is nothing new, using it in a wood furnace specially designed to make glass and ceramics at the same time is something that has rarely - if ever - been done, Gibbs said.

"We've been having a lot of fun with this," he said.

A handful of curious glass and ceramic artists from the area gathered to watch the proceedings, firing away with digital cameras.

The furnace was lit Monday, and was stoked overnight by a crew of helpers until it reached approximately 2300 degrees - the temperature at which glass melts.

The pottery was placed inside the furnace, and the flying ash from the firewood gives the jugs and bowls a natural decorative finish, Herbst explained.

Meanwhile, the glassblowers opened hatches

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Above, left | Lewis Olson and Peter Carter gather colored glass from ceramic bowls inside the furnace.

Above | Hot glass is drizzled onto pottery inside the furnace.

Left | Eric Meek (seated, center) and Peter Carter (standing, center), of the Corning Museum of Glass, work with molten glass from a wood-burning brick furnace behind the ceramics studio at Corning Community College.

Rivals agree: Congress must return

BY JOE DUNNING
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CORNING | It's rare when U.S. Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr. and his political opponent, Democrat Eric Massa, agree.

But that's the case as both incumbent and challenger said Tuesday Congress should return from its summer recess to deal with the nation's energy crisis.

"This is not an issue that is going to go away," said Kuhl, R-Hammond sport.

The Democrat-led Congress that opted last Friday to adjourn for five weeks is "totally oblivious to the plight of Americans," he added.

Massa, a Corning resident, said: "I agree with John McCain. Bring them all back. There should be no summer recess."

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Race will tie up traffic in Watkins

BY ANTHONY AFFISSIO
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WATKINS GLEN | NASCAR's Sprint Cup Centurion Boats at The Glen will provide plenty of thrills this weekend.

It will also create heavy traffic near Watkins Glen International.

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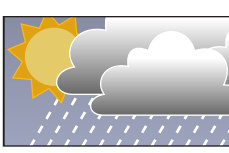
COMING THURSDAY



The most comprehensive preview of this weekend's Sprint Cup Series race at Watkins Glen International.



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