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The LEADER

CORNING | NEW YORK

SUNDAY | MAY 3 | 2009

\$1.50

County may pay \$485K for \$13 meal

BY MARY PERHAM
leaderbath@yahoo.com

BATH | Steuben County may be forking out nearly \$500,000 in a court award over a \$13 lunch.

The pay out stems from legal action taken against the county by a former Steuben County Department of Social Services caseworker fired six

years ago after being accused of falsifying an expense claim for Chinese food.

Dennis Putman, of Cameron, was eventually cleared of criminal charges in the case and then pursued civil action against the county.

It has apparently paid off as five judges on the state Appellate Division of the Supreme Court recently

awarded Putman roughly \$485,000 in damages.

The amount is based on recovering general and future monetary damages, plus legal fees.

Putman, a 25-year veteran of the county, was originally charged in June 2003 with the class E felony of first-degree falsifying business records. Putman was accused of sub-

mitting non-business meal vouchers from Chinese restaurants for reimbursement that totaled about \$13.

However, Putman was acquitted after jury trials in both the civil and criminal courts. The county appealed the verdicts, but settled a grievance filed by the union on Putman's behalf for approximately \$40,000.

Putman's lawsuit against the county was for malicious prosecution, reportedly based on the fact county officials publicly escorted him from the building when he was fired.

The final ruling by the Appellate Court, Fourth Division said continuing a criminal proceeding without probable cause could support

action for malicious prosecution, and agreed the evidence supported the trial verdicts. However, the Appellate Court also stated juries may not duplicate the amount set aside for damages.

County Attorney Frederick Ahrens said the county has filed for a "leave to appeal,"

SEE MEAL | 10A

Vietnam veterans have place to remember



ERIC WENSEL | THE LEADER

Dennis Wolfe Sr., director of the new Vietnam Veterans War Museum in Elmira, speaks during Saturday's opening ceremonies.

Museum holds opening ceremony

BY JOHN ZICK
jzick@the-leader.com

ELMIRA | When Dennis Wolfe Sr. returned home from the Vietnam War in 1969, his cause was questioned and his service was demonized.

"They wouldn't even let us in the lobby (of the airport) because they thought we'd kill somebody," Wolfe recalled.

His experience was far from uncommon.

The unpopular war was taboo and the veterans were shunned. Many veterans felt like outcasts, and some do even today.

Over time, though, Vietnam veterans began to receive respect and recognition. And now, 40 years after Wolfe returned home, a museum chronicling the war has opened in the city of Elmira.

On Saturday, approximately 100 people and several dignitaries celebrated the grand opening of the Vietnam Veterans War Museum on Davis Street in Elmira.

"It's been our goal to get to this day," said Wolfe, the museum's director.

The museum, which opened after approximately 18



ERIC WENSEL | THE LEADER

U.S. Rep. Eric Massa, D-Corning, presents Michael Lehmann, a former local advocate with the Division of Veterans Affairs, with a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol on the day Lehmann retired from the VA.

months of work, is sponsored by the Maj. Robert H. Schuler Chapter No. 803 of the Vietnam Veterans of America, based in Elmira.

Schuler was the first Chemung County casualty of the Vietnam War.

"We carry forward with pride the fact that this museum sits in our city," Elmira Mayor John Tonello said.

The emotions of the Vietnam veterans on hand Saturday were palpable.

Midway through the cere-

mony, a helicopter flew overhead.

"I bet every one of you Vietnam guys had goosebumps running up your butt," Wolfe said. "I'll never,

SEE MUSEUM | 10A

City Council

Corning/Riverside trail to top agenda

BY JEFFERY SMITH
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IF YOU GO

What | Corning City Council
When | 7 p.m. Monday
Where | Corning City Hall

CORNING | The proposed creation of a 10-mile Corning/Riverside community trail will be discussed Monday at the City Council's monthly meeting.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

Tom O'Brien will show pictures of the proposed trail and discuss the location, which runs along the Chemung River from South Corning to West High in Painted Post.

The trail, which runs near the river dike, has been in place for some time and is used by the state Department of

Environmental Conservation.

Mayor Tom Reed said he is interested to hear more about the plan.

In other business, the council will:

- Vote on a street closing request for the Pop Can Fun Run and Kids 2 Kids Water Walk.

- Act on a request by Cinderella Softball Inc. to use a city parking lot.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this Oct. 14, 1996 file photo, Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole joins hands with his running mate Jack Kemp during their rally on a pier in San Diego.

Former VP nominee, quarterback Kemp dies

BY MATT APUZZO AND CAROLYN THOMPSON
Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON | Jack Kemp, the ex-quarterback, congressman, one-time vice-presidential nominee and self-described "bleeding-heart conservative" died Saturday.

His spokeswoman Bona Park and longtime friend and former campaign adviser Edwin J. Feulner confirmed that Kemp died after a lengthy illness.

Kemp had announced in January 2009 that he had been diagnosed with cancer. He said he was undergoing tests but gave no other detail.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell called Kemp "one of the nation's most distinguished public servants, Jack was a powerful voice in American politics for more than four decades."

Kemp, a former quarterback for the Buffalo Bills, represented western New York for nine terms in Congress, leaving the

House for an unsuccessful presidential bid in 1988.

Eight years later, after serving a term as President George H.W. Bush's housing secretary, he made it onto the national ticket as Bob Dole's running-mate.

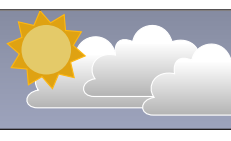
With that loss, the Republican bowed out of political office, but not out of politics. In speaking engagements and a syndicated column, he continued to advocate for the tax reform and supply-side policies - the idea that the more taxes are cut the more the economy will grow - that he pioneered.

Kemp's rapid and wordy style made the enthusiastic speaker with the neatly side-parted white hair a favorite on the lecture circuit, and a millionaire. (His style didn't win over everyone. In his memoirs, former Vice President Dan Quayle wrote that at Cabinet meetings, Bush

SEE KEMP | 10A



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