



NEWS GRAPHIC

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Splashing success

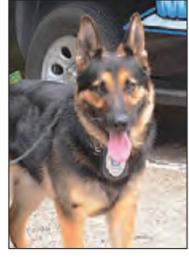
Cedarburg High School boys swimmers win Bulldog Invitational.

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New set of wheels

Cooperative effort underway to purchase a new Mequon police vehicle to transport Vero.

▶ Page A8



Pechura retiring in Grafton

Longtime school superintendent says the time is right

By Stephanie S. Beecher
News Graphic Correspondent

Grafton — After serving more than 10 years in the Grafton School District, Superintendent Jeffrey Pechura is retiring. Pechura made the announcement in a letter released to the school district on Tuesday.

While, the news came as a surprise to many within the district, Pechura's request for retirement is expected to pass with a unanimous vote at the upcoming Grafton School Board meeting Monday, said school board President Terry Ziegler.

"It is always unexpected when somebody good is leaving," said Ziegler. "We were lucky to have Jeff. He was a breath of fresh air. He brought a collaborative feeling to the district and we resonated with that."

"He was the right guy, at the right time," Ziegler added.

For Pechura, it was also the right time to move on. Pechura admits he was deeply affected by the Connecticut shooting, but said his decision to retire included a number of factors.

"Things just kind of hit you," Pechura said. "I thought: 'What more can I give?' Not a whole lot more. 'How much more of a difference can I make?' I really can't. So, the time is right."

Along with Pechura, Superintendent Daryl Herrick of Cedarburg is also retiring.

See PECHURA, Page A2

Plans for Mequon development move forward

Five properties to be rezoned at intersection of Mequon Road, Cedarburg Road

By Gary Achterberg
News Graphic Staff

Mequon — Plans for a five-building development at the crossroads of Mequon's Town Center took a major step forward Monday when the city's planning commis-

sion unanimously approved rezoning five properties.

The action came after city staff and developer Blair Williams, president of Whitefish Bay-based Wired Properties, described plans for the project that would be built at the intersection of Mequon and Cedarburg roads. It includes retail space, a restaurant, about 40 apartments and a new building for the American Legion.

The current building that houses the Howard J. Schroeder American Legion Post, 6006 W. Mequon Road, would be torn down, as



Drawing by Mayer Helminiak Architects

The proposed development includes a restaurant at the corner of Mequon and Cedarburg roads. A Mobil gas station now at that intersection would be removed.

would the Towne Market Mobil gas station, 11209 N. Cedarburg Road. Williams said he has contracts to acquire both parcels.

The city is poised to take several additional steps related to the project:

■ The Mequon Common Council will conduct a public hearing and take up the zoning change Feb. 12.

■ The city's landmarks commission must decide

whether to rescind its historic designation for the American Legion building. It meets Jan. 28. If it declines to rescind the designation, it could be appealed to the common council, which likely would consider that issue Feb. 12, too.

■ The project would then come back before the planning commission in early to mid-spring for building and

site plan approval.

Williams said the development fits well with the objectives of the Town Center. The district runs from the north end of Main Street in Thiensville south through the Mequon Road intersection as well as east on Mequon Road from the Milwaukee River west toward Wauwatosa Road.

See PLANS, Page A10

Costly contamination



DNR file photo

This 1972 photo shows an accumulation of debris of all sorts at the Denow landfill in the town of Grafton. Trash at the site has been buried but contamination concerns persist.

Denow landfill has been a long, expensive situation

By Steve Schuster
News Graphic Staff

Grafton — Monitoring vinyl chloride levels, a toxic chemical found in town of Grafton's residential well water decades ago due to illegal dumping at the Denow landfill is not an easy task, nor is it an inexpensive one.

Decades worth of legal action over the contamination of Ozaukee County's groundwater still hasn't reached a settlement, according to town of Grafton officials who, for the past four years, have been meeting in closed session discussions as recently as last month.

In 1998, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued notices of liability to Rexnord Corp., Tecumseh Products Co., and Brunswick Corp., the parent company of Mercury Marine. But according to the story, both Tecumseh and Mercury Marine denied dumping at Denow landfill.

In 2008, the town of Grafton and Great American Financial Resources Inc. were referred by

the state Department of Natural Resources to the state Department of Justice for allegedly failing to comply with an administrative order. The DOJ referral also alleged that the town of Grafton failed "to take actions necessary to restore the environment as required under Wis. Stats."

On Tuesday, DOJ Communications Officer Dana Brueck said, "The Department of Justice no longer has an active referral from DNR. We did not bring an action in response to the original referral because, in consultation with the DNR, we did not believe that an enforcement action was appropriate at the time. We will not comment specifically on the reasons; however, it may be noted that the parties have been willing to cooperate with the DNR."

While officials may be cooperating, the chemicals are not, according to experts.

Contaminants like vinyl chloride have a very long half-life and take an extended period of time to break down, according to Kenneth Wein, president of Key Engineering Group who served as a consultant for the landfill's remediation in the 1990s.

To complicate matters even further, depending on soil and water table conditions, it can be difficult to determine all of the sources of contamination and potential environmental impact, he said.

The resulting monitoring and remediation process is expensive, too.

According to Grafton Town Chairman Lester Bartel, state and federal officials wanted the town to spend as much as \$20 million to completely remove the toxic waste and ship it to a hazardous waste site several years ago. And, according to Bartel, state officials wanted the town to come up with money for monitoring every single private well within the town, which became unnecessary when the town switched water supplies.

Experts from two national consulting firms opined that the town could instead safely wait for the chemicals to dissipate over time through a process known as "natural attenuation," Bartel said.

But DNR officials said they never proposed such a costly endeavor.

Regardless, as of January 2013,

See LANDFILL, Page A9

Administrative picture changes at Cedarburg schools

By Lisa Curtis
News Graphic Staff

Cedarburg — Two more changes are occurring in the district office of the Cedarburg School District.

Fredrika Harper, who has served as director of curriculum and instruction since 2008, has announced her retirement, effective at the end of the school year.

Harper began her career in Cedarburg 35 years ago as a middle school science teacher at St. Francis Borgia Catholic School. She has also worked for the Shorewood and New Berlin school districts and was an administrator at the Oak Creek School District when she was hired in Cedarburg.

"I have loved every bit of the work," Harper said.

She said she has loved working for the Cedarburg School District and said it is poignant that she both began and ended her career here.

Superintendent Daryl Herrick said Harper will be missed.

"She has an exceptional work ethic, good working knowledge of the rigorous

See SCHOOL, Page A6

Board begins process of replacing superintendent

The Cedarburg School Board has taken the early steps of finding a superintendent to replace retiring administrator Daryl Herrick, and they are looking for the public's help.

The board has hired the education leadership search consultant BWP & Associates to assist in the search. School board President Kevin Kennedy said that during a conference call with the consultant Monday, the board was asked to hold listening sessions with staff and the community. That includes teachers, custodians, student council members, parents and other district residents.

"We will also do an online survey," Kennedy said. "Anyone can provide their thoughts and comments on the process, what's important in a superintendent."

Three listening sessions will be held on Jan. 21. Kennedy said they will be in the late afternoon or early evening, though times have not been set yet.

He said once the key traits in a superintendent are identified, they can begin the process of looking for an administrator who can fulfill them.

— Lisa Curtis



News Graphic Facebook Question of the Week:

Friday's Question: What do you think of the frog outside of Cedarburg's new Partnership Bank?

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Landfill: residents with private wells encouraged to get their water tested

Continued from Page A1

the town of Grafton taxpayers have already spent nearly \$2 million on costs related to the Denow landfill, and according to Bartel, as much as \$400,000 of that was spent on legal fees, which still continue to grow.

Affected homes were already connected to a safe alternative water supply with the help from village officials.

Bartel said that alone cost town taxpayers nearly \$800,000, and additional monitoring is still needed.

DNR officials confirmed well monitoring is continuing.

Town resident Ron Sobel, who lives near the former dump site said that although his well hasn't tested positive, he's still concerned.

"As a neighbor, I think it's a pretty obvious concern. We don't drink or even cook with our well water," he said.

According to Sobel, his biggest fear is the uncertainty.

"What are you going to do, test your well 365 days of the year? I remember talking to an EPA expert who said you can have the best well in the country one day and the worst the next day," he said.

Experts agree with Sobel.

"Well water samples can vary significantly from one day to the next," said Dr. Thomas Burke, an environmental expert, professor and associate dean at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore.

Burke noted levels detected in town wells may have been well beyond normal but could have been much worse.

The town of Grafton's contamination "is still a relatively low dose. But, that doesn't mean it's not serious," he said.

What are the effects of prolonged exposure to relatively smaller levels of vinyl chloride?

The short answer? Experts don't really know.

Burke said while not many studies have been conducted on those individuals who consumed this type of contaminated water, there are possible long term effects, even cancer.

"The odds are very small, but there is still some incremental risk for those exposed," he said.

According to Burke, the greatest risk is for children.

Burke also noted there aren't initial symptoms from consuming well water contaminated with vinyl chlo-

ride.

"It's not like drinking water filled with bacteria where you would have intestinal problems," he said.

Town officials said they are committed to making the land and water safe for their residents and visitors and recently submitted a revised remediation plan to state officials.

But Jeanne Tarvin, the geologist with Enviorn in Brookfield, who prepared the plan, declined to comment and deferred questions to attorney Linda Benfield with Foley & Lardner, who also declined to comment.

In December 2012, John Feeneey, a hydrologist with the DNR's Sheboygan County office, took over the case file from Nancy Ryan and said the DNR expects to send a response to town officials either approving or rejecting the town's plan sometime next month.

As recently as May 2012, town of Grafton water samples still show a presence of chemicals. In fact, one water monitoring site indicated levels of trichlorethene were at 3.7 ug/L, according to the DNR's website. However, some of other the monitoring sites

did not show a presence of chemicals. To view more of the recent and past monitoring results, visit <http://bit.ly/towngraffton2013> and type in 1133 for the license number.

Cooperation has improved between town and state officials, according to DNR officials.

"Things now seem to be moving along," Ryan said.

In the meantime, Wisconsin Sierra Club President Dr. Shahla Warner has advice for residents.

"If you have a private well, it's important to get your water tested," she said.

Warner also noted that if tests reveal excessive (chemical not bacterial) contamination levels, it's imperative for residents to avoid boiling the water.

"Often the inhalation effects are worse than drinking it," Warner said.

DNR officials suggested locating a water testing laboratory for additional information. Visit <http://bit.ly/towngrafftonwater> and under sample group codes select "volatile

organics," and leave the rest of the fields blank.

For more information on other water quality and testing issues visit <http://bit.ly/waterinfo2013>.

To view a copy of the town of Grafton's groundwater natural attenuation monitoring plan (revised remedial design report Nov. 2012), scan the adjacent QR code or visit <http://bit.ly/denow12>

