

Mountainside, SP-F Among Districts Receiving Grants As Part of 'Access 2000'

ELIZABETH—The latest phase of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders' Access 2000 school technology project is now underway, with school districts throughout the County launching new programs to integrate technology tools and the Internet into the classroom.

Instructors from the County's 23 public school districts submitted 350 grant applications totaling nearly \$400,000. The Freeholder Board has awarded \$187,000 for more than 200 programs, including at least one from each district.

Freeholder Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari noted that most project funds were matched or augmented by local school districts, educational foundations, or parent and community groups.

Among those programs receiving are:

- Development of videoconferencing capability for Mountainside's Deerfield Elementary School. The school plans use a \$10,000 grant from the local parent association along with a matching grant from the school district and Access 2000 dollars.
- A Web Presence Project at the Scotch Plains-Fanwood district's Park Middle School a project that will involve students and staff in hands-on training in Web site generation, content production, digital production and publishing. Officials have said the Web pages may develop into a communication tool with the community and the entry point for all Internet instruction and parent-teacher interaction.

- The use of Music Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) technology to expand the scope of electronic instruments for student exploration in music composition and practice in the Berkeley Heights School System. This technology will be incorporated through a course to be taken in MIDI by the district's band director.

"The Freeholder Board developed the Access 2000 program last year to ensure that every student in Union County's public schools has access to state-of-the-art computers and software, high-speed Internet connections and teachers trained in computers and technology by the end of the year 2000," said Freeholder Linda d. Stender, a Fanwood resident.

"Hands-on knowledge of computers and technology is absolutely vital for young people today's job market," added Freeholder Scutari.

Teachers could apply for individual grants of up to \$1,000 and schools could request up to \$2,500 for larger collaborative school-wide projects.

This Access 2000 phase also included free technology training courses for teachers. These courses represented another \$20,000 in funding from the county.

County Institutes Ban on Open Fires In Reservation

ELIZABETH—The Union County Division of Parks and Recreation has announced a ban on all open fires in the Watchung Reservation. The ban will be in effect until further notice.

No open fires, grills or barbecues will be allowed in the park throughout the duration of the ban. County police, who patrol the park regularly, will enforce the ban. The county has posted signs in the park advising users of the ban.

"The ongoing drought throughout this region has made the ban necessary," said Nicholas Scutari, Chairman of the Union County Freeholder Board. "We have a lot of dry wood and leaves there, and this makes the possibility of a fire very real."

Located in the towns of Berkeley Heights, Mountainside, Scotch Plains, Summit and Springfield, the 2,000-acre reservation is the largest park in Union County. It is home to more than 40 miles of hiking trails, 26 miles of bridle trails, stream and lakes for fishing, a planetarium and museum and the historic Deserted Village of Feltsville.

"The Watchung Reservation is an important recreation facility for all the residents of Union County, and we need to take these precautions to protect it for future generations," said Freeholder Scutari.

Scotch Plains Planning Group Reviews Y2K Preparedness

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Local Emergency Planning Committee met recently to assess the township's year 2000 planning and readiness, including individual department preparations and readiness reports from local utilities.

The committee agreed that major disruptions are unlikely, but discussed contingency plans for possible scenarios.

"The township and townspeople should be prepared for Y2K just as they should always be prepared for an emergency such as a major winter storm or a hurricane," said Emergency Management Coordinator Don Wormley. "and I believe the town is well prepared."

Municipal Manager Tom Atkins told the committee that the township's administrative systems are all certified by the appropriate hardware and software suppliers.

Year 2000 is an issue because some older computers use two digits to identify a year when recording dates. This is expected to cause problems when the calendar year switches from 1999 to 2000, if not corrected, because computers will go from 1999 to 1900.

He credited the Township Technology Committee, headed by volunteer Ken Anderson, with getting Scotch Plains started over two years ago on

assessing vulnerability of township systems to Y2K problems.

Fire Chief Jonathan Ellis reported to the committee that all Fire Department systems are either not affected or are in compliance. Jeffrey Ellis and David Luce, who represented Police Chief Thomas O'Brien at the meeting, reported that the Police Department had run a comprehensive review.

All systems will be in compliance, including 911 and police radio systems.

The Scotch Plains Public Works Department has generators available to power wastewater pumping stations in the event of a power outage.

Superintendent of Public Works Earl Jackson, who represented Director of Public Property Walter DiNizo at the meeting, reported that these generators are tested on a regular schedule.

Mr. Wormley and Assistant Deputy Coordinator Bob Krowicki reported on meetings in which they have participated that have been run by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and State and County Offices of Emergency Management. The meetings have been held to inform local officials about current utility preparedness and to discuss appropriate contingency planning at the local level.

At these meetings, PSE&G and Bell Atlantic reported that they expected to have network and critical systems compliant as of June.

State officials reported that no problems are expected with water or natural gas delivery because virtually all of the critical aspects of the distribution systems were installed prior to computerization. Generators are already in place where pumping is required in water supply systems.

The state Department of Transportation reported that there are no known instances in the state of traffic lights that are date sensitive so they will not be affected. The state has evaluated the preparedness of New Jersey Transit and found it excellent.

The committee reviewed the township's emergency plans and discussed the need for sufficient staffing in township departments over the holiday.

For more information about the township's Y2K plan, please contact Mr. Wormley at (908) 769-6544.

Neumann Foundation Donates Bikes to Cops

ELIZABETH — Four Union County departments will expand or launch bicycle patrol programs thanks to a donation of police-ready bicycles.

The police-ready bikes were donated by The Neumann Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Westfield that was established in 1989 in memory of Essex County Police Officer Keith E. Neumann.

A Seton Hall University graduate, Officer Neumann was accidentally shot and killed during a pre-dawn drug raid in Irvington 10 years ago.

Nicholas P. Scutari, Chairman of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders said the bikes were delivered during a ceremony at the John A. Stamler Police Academy in Scotch Plains on July 8.

The Union County, Linden and Summit police departments received one bicycle each, while the Rahway Police Department's existing bicycle patrol gained two additional bikes.

Police forces from North Plainfield, Franklin, Dover, Spring Lake and Rockaway also received new bicycles. The Union County Police Department received a patrol car bicycle rack and other accessories from New Jersey Cycles in Linden to help kick-off the county force's new bicycle patrol unit.

"The Freeholder Board applauds this donation and thanks the Neumann Foundation for contributing to the safety of the people of Union County," said Freeholder

Scutari, a Linden resident. "Bicycle patrols are excellent tools to put more police on the streets, where they can mingle with residents and business owners while remaining highly mobile."

The Neumann Foundation was started by the Neumann family and friends in order to provide college scholarships to Seton Hall students majoring in criminal justice. The Foundation began to assist bicycle patrol programs to help police departments continue Neumann's philosophy of police involvement in their communities, according to a county spokesman.

To date, the Neumann Foundation has awarded 23 police bicycles, valued at \$1,300 each, and donated \$15,000 in scholarships.

"The work of the Foundation is an appropriate way to honor the memory of Keith Neumann. He served his community with honor and distinction, and these donations help many more officers serve their communities," said Freeholder Linda d. Stender, a Fanwood resident.

The Foundation receives the bulk of its funds from an annual golf classic. This year's outing will be held at the Maplewood Country Club on Tuesday, September 21.

For more information on the outing or about the organization, please write to The Neumann Foundation, PO Box 2654, Westfield, 07091, or call (908) 232-0715, or by email, neumannfoundation@home.com.

Sidewalk Sales Kick Off Today in Scotch Plains

SCOTCH PLAINS — Summer sidewalk sales will be held in Scotch Plains Towne Centre today, tomorrow and Saturday, July 22, 23 and 24, along East Second Street, Westfield Avenue and Park Avenue.

The Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA) has invited shoppers to visit the township and take advantage of promotions offered by the boutiques, gift and antique shops, as well as other town businesses.

Tonight, the Summer Concert Series will continue at 7:30 p.m. on the Village Green, featuring Saturday Night Fever (disco).

The Farmers' Market on Park Avenue will be held from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.

For more information on these events, please visit the Web site www.visitscotchplains.com.



WOMEN HELPING WOMEN...Governor Christine Todd Whitman recently presented a \$30,000 check to Women for Women of Union County. Founded in 1984, Women for Women is a non-profit organization that provides self-help services and professional counseling for women and families in crisis and transition. The state grant was secured with the help of Assemblymen Alan Augustine and Richard Bagger (R-22). Pictured, left to right, are: Mr. Augustine, Executive Director of Women for Women Marilyn Spera, Governor Whitman, President Susan Koslowsky and Corresponding Secretary Joan Shatkin, both of Women for Women; Mr. Bagger and Commissioner of the state Department of Community Affairs Jane Kenny.

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