



# Adirondack Daily Enterprise

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## Silt spills from dam into W. Branch of AuSable

By REBECCA STEFFAN  
Enterprise Staff Writer

LAKE PLACID — The state Department of Environmental Conservation is investigating a silt spill that has entered the West Branch of the AuSable River via the North Meadow Brook from a dam 1,000 feet upstream.

According to DEC spokesman David Winchell, DEC staff have determined that the source of the silt was an empty impoundment in North Meadow Brook, several hundred feet upstream of North Meadow Brook's confluence with the West Branch of the AuSable River. Winchell said a local fisherman alerted DEC to the silt spill on Monday.

The impoundment is on the Indian Pass Ranch on the Adirondack Loj Road which was recently purchased by Joseph Barile of Lake Placid.

Barile could not be reached as of press time but told DEC staff the water was drawn down to allow for needed repairs on the earthen dam, according to Winchell. DEC Water Quality staff visited the site Tuesday and have directed Barile to cease work on the dam until further notice, Winchell said in an e-mail.

Winchell said Barile did not report the drainage and that the DEC is still investigating how long the situation has been going on and how far the silt spill has traveled.

The DEC is also investigating the impacts of the release and determining if any violations of Environmental Conservation Law or regulations occurred, according to Winchell, and also whether Barile would have needed a permit from the DEC to do the repairs and drain the dam.

The silt is still flowing into the AuSable from Barile's stream-fed pond. Even so, Winchell said the water is still safe to fish and paddle in.

"It is just muck and silt that had accumulated in the bottom of the impoundment," Winchell said.

### WEATHER



Mostly sunny today  
Lows around 40 tonight  
Sunny Friday

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### WEB POLL

This week's question is:

**The DEC's long-ago conversion of Old Mountain Road from a town road to a wilderness trail stands challenged in court. Should the road be opened to motorized vehicles?**

Cast your vote and make comments online at  
adirondackdailyenterprise.com.

This poll is not scientific, and its results represent only the opinions of Internet users who have chosen to participate.

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## LP credit card receipts raise questions

By ANDY BATES  
For the Enterprise

LAKE PLACID — Even before the findings of a state Comptroller's Office audit of the village of Lake Placid's credit card usage and policies are released, village officials have been put on the hot seat regarding some perceived misuse and lofty spending with village-issued credit cards.

At last week's board meeting, two members of the public challenged the board to explain expenditures it approved for meals and hotel rooms primarily, but village Mayor Jamie Rogers declined to comment on specific receipts until the

audit is released.

Until that time, it's unknown what expenditures may have signaled a red flag with the auditors. However, an investigation by the Lake Placid News into roughly two years' worth of village credit card statements, vouchers and receipts drew some flags of its own.

Like those who spoke out at the recent board meeting, the News uncovered a mass of hotel charges, ranging from \$150 to \$200 stays at Holiday Inns and similarly priced



The state Freedom of Information Law was asserted in making this report

accommodations to a charge of more than \$5,000 for lodging at the Gideon Putnam Hotel and Conference Center in Saratoga Springs in June 2005 and a \$2,300 charge for the same hotel in June 2006.

According to village Clerk Kathryn McKillip, the charges at the Gideon Putnam are for the New York Conference of Mayors' annual meeting, and all other hotel charges are for workshops and training sessions village officials and employees have attended.

The bulk of out-of-town hotel stays, she said, is accounted for by the fact that employees in the electric, water and sewer departments, as well as the village police

department, are required to attend training sessions, classes and seminars to keep up their accreditations.

Electric Superintendent Peter Kroha is also required to attend monthly New York Power Authority meetings.

While the village had no specific numbers on how many such seminars and sessions village workers attend yearly, Rogers said it is not uncommon for the village to approve travel expenses for at least one employee per month.

Rogers, in looking at the hotel receipts and others expenditures, said many

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## Tamarack employees report to work to find inn razed by fire



The Tamarack Inn is a pile of gnarled metal, soot and scorched earth after a massive fire occurred Tuesday night and Wednesday morning. When firefighters opened the roof, they discovered roofs built on top of each other, which made it difficult to put out the fire.

(Enterprise photo — Erika Lorentzen)

By ERIKA LORENTZEN  
Enterprise Staff Writer

DUANE CENTER — The twisted metal and charred debris now lie in a heap where the Tamarack Inn in the town of Duane burned to the ground Tuesday night and Wednesday. No one was hurt or injured in the intense fire.

"It went quick and very hot," firefighter Bruce Pelkey of Duane said. "The whole thing filled with smoke. It would have been impossible to save anyone inside."

The building was completely destroyed. Propane tanks by the side of the building and the gas pump in front were spared from exploding by the work of dozens of firefighters.

The owner, Robert Davis, purchased the Tamarack three months ago and normally slept in the building instead of driving to his home in Lake Placid. Shortly after closing at 9 p.m. Davis drove home the night of the fire.

"I was relieved Bob wasn't inside, because a lot of the time he sleeps

here at night," bartender Doug Buchanan said. "He's taking it in stride, but we're lucky the propane or gas tanks didn't catch fire."

Shocked and at a loss for words, Davis said the business was moving forward until this happened. He said he believes the compressors for the cooler overheated, causing it to spark. However, the origin of the fire is far from known and will take a few days to determine. Thus far,

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## Saranac Lake clears, cleans lot for new firehouse

By HEATHER SACKETT  
Enterprise Staff Writer

SARANAC LAKE — The investigation into possible environmental contamination at the village-owned property at 400 Broadway has resulted in the partial clearing of the lots and the removal of barrels, car parts and other contaminants.

The access to the site at what is called "400 Broadway" is off of Old Lake Colby Road, a residential area. The village has tentative plans to construct a new firehouse at the location, but possible contamination from an automotive repair business and electric company that both previously occupied the site in the 1950s and '60s has necessitated a study and clean-up before the new firehouse can be built.

The village received a \$165,900 Brownfield Project grant last year to determine the extent of the contamination as part of the state's Clean Air/Clean Water Act. The state Department of Environmental Conservation is overseeing the work, which is being done by engineering company CT Male Associates, of Latham.

Traffic on state Route 86 can now be seen and heard from Old Lake Colby Road because the trees have been logged and cleared from what used to be a heavily forested area. The extensive clearing that is apparently



The remains of a foundation of a business from the 1950s and '60s is being checked out by an engineering firm hired by the village of Saranac Lake for possible contamination. The village plans to build a new firehouse on the site.

(Enterprise photo — Heather Sackett)

necessary for this project poses the question: what would happen to the cleared lots should the village decide the cleanup is too costly and abandons the plans to build the firehouse?

Village Manager Richard DePuy said the village will probably make use

of the site in one way or another, even if the fire department decides not to build there.

"I understand the pollution is extensive," DePuy said. "Even if the fire

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## Museum raises new tower plan



The Adirondack Museum gave this revised design for its Main Street, Lake Placid branch to the Lake Placid-North Elba Joint Review Board Wednesday night. The tower is six feet shorter than before.

Museum reps: Our design budget is running out; are we getting close?  
Reviewers: No, not really

By REBECCA STEFFAN  
Enterprise Staff Writer

LAKE PLACID — Two controversial building projects were on the agenda at Wednesday night's Lake Placid-North Elba Joint Review Board, and the board is still on the fence about approving either one.

The proposed Adirondack Museum branch on Main Street, after months of architectural refinements at the board's request, came back before the board with a new design to the original tower proposed by architects. Before their presentation, Museum Board Chairman John Fritzinger warned that the museum is running out of funding for design work and would like some hint as to whether the project is near approval or not.

In December 2006, then Gov. George Pataki, presented the Adirondack Museum with \$1 million to be used for its planned Lake Placid extension.

The timber tower has been redesigned by architects Skidmore, Owings and Merrill to measure 64 feet from the sidewalk to its highest point, six feet shorter than the original tower's design.

Architects have removed the five vertical timber elements and replaced them with "horizontal timber elements" at four different height levels for design and structural stability, according to Fritzinger.

Glass and wood "mullions" were increased on the facade of the building to make it more "transparent," Fritzinger said.

Fritzinger said the museum has compromised and the building's design has evolved while still keeping with the original architectural concept.

Even so, Fritzinger said the museum would like to know whether its project is approvable. "We're a public institution and we're using other people's money," Fritzinger said. "We're very near exhausting our allowable time and money without knowing some sort of commitment."

"Now is the time for us to know if we're barking up the wrong tree," he added.

JRB Chairman Bill Hurley said the board is still waiting to hear from its lawyer on whether or not the project fits into the village's Land Use Code's architectural guidelines, and will wait to make a decision until then.

Several board members said they still have a problem with the architectural design and the timber tower's height.

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