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CLARE COUNTY

Cuts made to balance budget

Commissioners ruled MSU Extension, parks and recreation to cease as of Oct. 1

By Susan Field

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In an effort to trim a deficit of nearly \$800,000 from its budget, the Clare County Commission on Thursday approved several cuts, including discontinuing funding the Michigan State University Extension.

Several residents with children in the county's 4-H program were at the meeting to discuss the value of agriculture and 4-H for youth, but commissioners are faced with a deficit of nearly \$360,000 after discussing cuts earlier this week.

Commissioners on Thursday opted to cut as of Oct. 1, the beginning of the 2017 fiscal year, the MSU Extension, parks and recreation, a part-time employee at the veterans affairs office, to reduce Administrator Tracy Byard's assistant to half-time, to reduce the sheriff's department

budget by \$100,000 and to not fill a part-time vacant position in County Clerk Pamela Mayfield's office.

In order to have an MSU Extension office, the county has to fund the department with a minimum of \$43,146; roughly half of its current budget, Byard said.

In addition to the cuts already made, commissioners are asking heads of departments that were not affected by the cuts to reduce their budgets by 7 percent, Byard

said. Residents opposing the elimination of the extension have talked about asking voters to approve a millage, and if commissioners choose to put that on the November ballot, it must be done by Aug. 16.

Gina Pratt Forster, a 4-H parent, was at Thursday's meeting and said she thinks commissioners recognize that the MSU Extension is valuable to the community but that they are in a tough

situation trying to balance the budget.

"There were community members who stood up and said that they thought that Michigan State University Extension was a valuable program and suggested that maybe this is something we might have to put to a millage vote in the future in order to fund it," she said.

Commissioners discussed putting a public safety millage on the November ballot, Byard said.

ISABELLA COUNTY

COUSINS GET A TASTE OF 4-H IN CALF EVENT



LISA YANICK-JONAITIS — THE MORNING SUN

From left, cousins Josiah Thielen, Parker Fair and Henry Carmlet work together to move a calf from a barn to a trailer after the calf parade at the Isabella County Youth and Farm Fair on Thursday.

Josiah, Parker and Henry worked together to escort a calf through the arena

By Lisa Yanick-Jonaitis

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For pre-school aged cousins Josiah Thielen, Henry Carmlet and Parker Fair, a chance to walk a calf through an arena Thursday was a taste of 4-H life.

While their older counterparts prepared animals for Thursday night's livestock auction at the Isabella County Youth and Farm Fair the three boys participated in the baby calf parade, working together to maneuver one calf through the arena and out the barn door — and the task was not without its challenges.

The three struggled together, all pulling on one rope and eventually leading the stubborn calf

"I learned you have to hold it close. Like the chickens. Sometimes they get away when you want to hold them, and then they're hard to chase."

— Parker Fair, about the calf he and his cousins walked

from the barn to a trailer. "It was a little wild," 4-year-old Fair said of the calf. "We just had to pull it out of there."

His 3-year-old cousin Carmlet said very seriously that the calf licked his elbow, which didn't exactly tickle.

"It hurt some," he said. "It felt wet."

For children not yet old enough to participate in 4-H activities, events like the calf parade offer an opportunity to

experience showmanship firsthand.

"It introduces them to the fair," said Tim Fair, Parker's father. "The can pretend they're like the big kids."

Fair and Carmlet agreed that overall it was a fun experience, and both said they want to show animals in 4H when they are older.

"I liked walkin' it," Carmlet said. "I like cows, and I like horses."

The calf parade offered lessons to the boys too.

Fair, who has chickens at home and said he already knows that animals can be hard to hold onto, said there's a trick to controlling a calf.

"I learned you have to hold it close," Fair said. "Like the chickens. Sometimes they get away when you want to hold them, and then they're hard to chase."

There are benefits to all the hard work, at least in Carmlet's eyes.

"Look! We got a ribbon," he said proudly.

The fair continues Friday with public speaking, junior and senior dairy judging, a talent show and more; Friday's grandstand event is the truck demolition derby which begins at 7:30 p.m.

UNION TOWNSHIP

Enforcement ordinance adopted; hearing held

By Eric Stafford

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Union Township has adopted an ordinance that will extend enforcement regulations for township parks to Indian Pines Park after holding a public hearing Wednesday night.

The ordinance was approved by all board of trustees members with the exception of Clerk Margie Henry during the meeting.

Essentially, this allows the township's enforcement agencies such as its parks department and the Isabella County Sheriff's Department to enforce its rules in portions of the park owned by the city of Mt. Pleasant.

On Monday, the city commission authorized a similar agreement regarding its enforcement of township park ordinances in Indian Pines.

However, concerns about the park becoming more accessible to the community were brought up by a Union Township couple in the public hearing portion.

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UNION TOWNSHIP

Community issue survey results revealed

By Eric Stafford

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Results of a survey to determine experiences and opinions about Union Township's services and views on its future have been revealed.

The township has worked with the Center for Applied Research and Rural Studies (CARRS) at Central Michigan University to create the survey since late last year, and out of the 1,870 that were sent to good addresses, 718 were completed. The result was a 38.4 percent response rate — 40 percent from property owners and 20.8 percent of renters.

CARRS Director Mary Senter discussed the results in front of the township board of trustees during its meeting Wednesday night.

Senter said the response rate was wonderful and way more

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