

Lots of Cars, Not Much Speeding



photo by Doug McClure
One of the *Hardwick Police Department's* new speed signs in place on West Church Street. During its first week, the sign recorded almost 11,000 vehicles and very little speeding.

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — At the September 20 *Hardwick Select Board* meeting, Police Chief Aaron Cochran presented the results from the new speed sign's first week in action, and how the new part-time sign is slated to become the department's full-time officer. The meeting was also the last of a flurry of select board meetings, two of them special sessions, capping a busy but productive September for the board.

At the first September meeting, the board members had speculated that one speed sign's ability to capture data could prove a useful and more immediate alternative to a formal speed study. With just one sign in operation, on Church and West Church, that proved to be a good presumption.

Nearly 11,000 cars used either Church or West Church Street

during that one week. With only two exceptions, the drivers adhered to the speed limit. Analysis of the data for all seven days showed, the average speed was well under the posted 25 mph speed limit. Speeds peaked on Friday, with an average speed of 18.7 mph. Just over one percent of the total traffic was actually speeding, according to the data Cochran provided.

"It'd be great for us as managing entity to know what the traffic numbers are on our roads," said select board vice chair Dana Hale. "I'd like to put it out on some of our Class 4 roads, our dirt roads, and see what the speeds are; we have a lot of off-roading travel in well in excess of 35."

"If we needed counts for certain roads, we could put it on them," said Select Board Chair Eric Romick.

The board was surprised at the amount of traffic and equally surprised by the adherence to speed limits.

"That's amazing," said board member Elizabeth Wood, "11,000 vehicles."

"The compliance is pretty good," added Cochran.

A second sign will soon be in place and, with the knowledge of how much data can be provided by just one sign, board members are interested in the placement of the second sign. Town Manager Jon Jewett and others suggested someplace close to Brochu Cottage to catch traffic inbound on Route 16.

The preception before the meeting had been that more people were speeding than the data showed.

"We get complaints from residents on most every street in town," said Cochran. "If the data trained eye, it might look like they're not speeding as much. This will help us determine and direct enforcement."

It's hoped with more data, a lot more information can be gleaned to get a clearer picture of traffic patterns, flow and speeds.

Cochran also announced that part-time hire Max Rasmussen had been offered the full-time position established by a Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant.

"He's been working out well," said Cochran. "We've offered him the full-time position which, he accepted, so he's expected to go

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Woodbury Jr. Firefighter Mikayla Smith helps Braydon Stratton aim a fire hose during Fire Safety Education Day held at Woodbury School Sept. 20. Members of the Woodbury Fire Department spoke to the K-6 students about fire safety, then brought each grade through the Vermont Fire Safety House and finished with the students participating in a firefighter challenge.

Feds Seize Heroin Destined for Caledonia County

by Doug McClure

BURLINGTON — St. Johnsbury residents Richard Trudeau and Julie Hurst were speeding on I-91 in Springfield when a state trooper pulled them over on September 6. A subsequent search found 3,800 bags of heroin under the driver's seat and 160 in a purse in the passenger's seat. Hurst was in the driver's seat, according to police. Trudeau was arrested for cocaine distribution in 2011 and both say they are addicts. Hurst is pregnant and asked for special accommodation from courts in light of that fact.

Weeks later, the same investigation led to the arrest of Luis A. Rodriguez, 22, of Holyoke, Massachusetts, with an additional 10,000 bags of heroin. All of the heroin sampled in both arrests tested positive for fentanyl. The two busts together netted what police say is \$85,000 worth of heroin in street value. It was destined for Caledonia County.

U.S. Attorney, Vermont Dis-

trict, Christina Nolan said in a statement. These seizures of the deadly drug fentanyl potentially saved thousands of Vermonters. At the same time, our law-enforcement community deprived a dangerous drug trafficking organization of nearly \$100,000 in profit. In June, we will work tirelessly with our partners at all levels of law enforcement and across state lines to bring justice to those who would profit hugely from the tragedy of illegal drugs.

In April, state police arrested two persons with 1,670 bags of heroin in Barre. A 2017 bust netted thousands of bags of heroin in Newport and 20 arrests, and in 2013, a dozen arrests resulted from a joint task force operation with 200 bags of heroin intended for a Caledonia County trip. In June, 25 were arrested in a bust in Washington County.

Opioids Continue to Take a Toll Across State, Region

by Doug McClure

MONTEPELIER — Opioids in general and fentanyl in particular, are inflicting a grim toll both statewide and locally. This is just in the number of overdoses but also on society in general, according to state and public reports. The opioid impact remains despite strong programs, intervention programs and drastic measures to fight it.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, 10 to 50 times more potent than heroin, which drug dealers are using increasingly to cut more expensive drugs such as heroin and cocaine. According to the Vermont Department of Health (DOH) preliminary data, as of June 2018, fentanyl overdoses have killed one person every other month in Caledonia County alone. The data shows 2017 was the first year Caledonia recorded any fentanyl-related deaths, with three. At least three have died as of June 2018. Statewide, the death toll has gotten exponentially worse.

By comparison, only four Vermont counties recorded fentanyl-related fatalities in 2010 with one each, totaling four statewide. In 2018 only two Vermont counties did not report any fentanyl fatalities. The heroin fatalities rate has maintained a higher level than average but stable level, however fentanyl deaths are surging in Vermont.

The costs of overdoses in Vermont is estimated by the Ameri-

can Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research to be over \$1.2 million, or 4.05% the state's gross domestic product.

The toll is not just to those who overdose. The DOH said in a 2016 report that over half of the children in Department of Children and Families (DCF) care were under six years of age were there as a result of opioid-related petitions for termination of parental rights increased 93% from 2013-2016.

In our area, a driver police alleged to have been in the inflexibility of opioids caused a fatal accident that took the life of Wolcott teenager Dexter Thurston. Thurston had plans with his girlfriend to move to Florida and go to college; his family simply had run out of milk, so he took her 11-year-old brother with him to the store to buy more.

Vermont has made immense into its addiction problem with a public-health, treatment-centered approach and needle exchange programs. In his 2014 state of the state address, Gov. Peter Shumlin said, "In every corner of our state, heroin and opioid addiction threatens us."

In 2016, Shumlin's administration made the opioid reversal and drug naloxone, known as narcan, available without a prescription. It is now carried by all police and emergency responders, including the *Hardwick Police*.

The "hub-and-spoke" model See OPIOIDS, 2

Cabot School Finances Show Surplus

by Will Walters

CABOT — Cabot School ended the fiscal year with a budget surplus of \$140,000, according to Business Manager Christian Kimball. She said that the surplus will help a lot in planning next year's budget.

Kimball explained that the reasons for the surplus are a combination of factors. There were more tuition students, \$10,000 in interest, E-Rate money was higher than budgeted and total revenue was \$53,996 higher than budgeted.

On the expense side, regular education spending was down \$20,000, there was a lower tuition pay for pre-k students, costs of supplies were lower as well as the cost of student support services to the early department of teacher. Higher enrollment from the school for special education reduced the school's cost for special education.

The small bus was totaled due to an accident in the lot that the repair shop it was sent to. No school drivers were involved in the accident. Superintendent Mark Trear said the insurance company had saved \$47,000, and options for replacing the bus are being explored.

Tucker said the school has been experiencing water-quality problems due to the town's work on Daville Hill Road. Sand and gravel are getting into the water lines in gymnasium. He said Cabot Water/Wastewater-Sanitary has helped a lot in planning next year's budget.

Permitting the town's water treatment plant will cover the school for the problem. Tucker said he has been looking for some plumbing bids.

Some of the drinking fountain and faucet flagged for last presents past year have been replaced and back in use. There will be a follow-up test after 30 days, as directed by the state.

State of the *Twifield Union School* soccer games, said Tucker, said he played at Cabot due to the condition of the *Twifield field*. Principal Glenda Crease reported that attendance for pre-k-12 is 174 students, and there has been 97-99 percent attendance. She said while a high-school basketball team is double, there is the chance the team may not play out and then the students will lose the opportunity to play. She is commended against a Cabot team, and the school will go with a member-to-member agreement for a combined team.

A satellite photo of the Saw Mill dam on the Wincoosa River in Cabot showing the dam and the derelict rail structure just below it.

Saw Mill Dam Removal Proposal Voted Down

by Will Walters

CABOT — The saga of the Saw Mill Road dam on the Wincoosa River in Lower Cabot came to a close September 18, when the select board voted not to approve the agreement for a Housing and Urban Development grant for the purchase of the property and structures of the old mill.

The matter has drawn significant public interest over the past few months, with 20 to 40 residents at board meetings. There were 20 participants present at the most recent meeting.

The proposed project was started in 2015, when town planner Karen Deady submitted a grant application to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for flood mitigation work that would have the town removed. The structures are in a dilapidated condition and the dam, which is a cop on a natural ledge, is slowly deteriorating.

FEMA was not acting on the application with any significant speed and the application was used to apply for a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant for flood damage caused by Hurricane Sandy. At past meetings, resident Larry Gochey had stated that there was no flooding from hurricane Sandy or tropical storm Irene in that location.

Member Jack Daniels was not present at the meeting, and Ted Downey called in to participate by telephone. Chair Mike Hogan, Fernie Shattley and Fred Ducharme were present. State law allows members to participate by telephone but requires a roll-call vote on all actions, and the minutes must record the votes of the individual members. The vote was 3-0-1 with Hogan abstaining and Downey voting no. Residents have raised a number of issues at meetings over the past two months, including ap-

plicability of the grant in the absence of flooding, contamination of the soil, the belated release to See DAM, 2

photo courtesy of Google



Arvart Platt

Gary Nolan

Dave Vlasovone

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