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Timberlands' tough times

Easement, tax reforms called for to keep Ad'k backcountry intact

By MATTHEW RUSSELL
Enterprise Staff Writer

ALBANY — The impending sale of thousands of acres of timberlands in the Adirondacks has renewed the call for legislative action to keep backcountry parcels together for the benefit of the region's environment and forest-based economy.

The forest products industry in the Adirondacks is in big trouble, according to several industry sources, as evidenced by news that the Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper company is getting ready to put about 5,000 acres of timberlands on the real estate market. Also, sources say the Champion International and other large land-owning forest industry concerns are considering selling off thousands of acres to cope with a cash crunch in a competitive business hit hard by the recession.

Both the environmental community and the forest products industry agree that immediate action is needed to help companies like Lyons Falls stay in the forest products business. Hundreds of jobs in and around the Adirondacks could be lost if companies like Lyons Falls fail, experts agree.

"I'm hoping this is a wakeup call," said forest products industry spokesman Kevin King of the Lyons Falls situation.

King noted that while productive discussions of problems facing the timber industry continue, Adirondack forest lands companies are facing immediate problems. The high cost of holding land in New York, where property taxes are up to four times higher than neighboring states, is the biggest problem facing the industry and is forcing timber companies to consider putting land on the market, King said.

Forces in the industry and among environmentalists are pushing for a two-pronged solution — more money for conservation easements and for land tax policy reform. Both methods involve legislative action, particularly in the Senate where funding mechanisms for easements and tax policy changes have foundered recently.

High level officials in Gov. Mario Cuomo's office, in the environmental community, in a federal forestry study group and in the timber industry are turning their eyes to Sen. Ronald Stafford, R-Peru — Stafford is the key to passage of legislation to fund easement programs and any other legislation concerning the Adirondacks.

"The senator is very interested in the problem of keeping the backcountry intact. Among other concerns, easements and other tax abatement programs are under consideration. The effort is ongoing, and complicated," said Stafford spokesman Thomas Bergin.

Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper company vice-president Daniel McGough said easements are the key.

"We find that the New York state conservation easement program is the best answer in terms of continuing the present use of these forest lands," McGough said. The Lyons Falls mill, where the company makes several varieties of paper using a unique chlorine-free manufacturing process, employs about 250 people and makes use of several types of trees. The company has had to lay off a fifth of its labor force since the first of the year.

McGough credited state officials in the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Environmental Conservation for their

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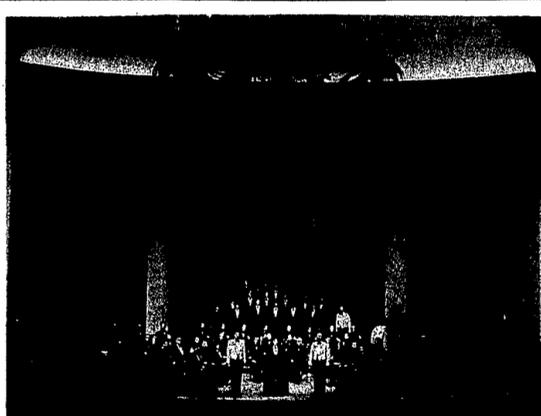
Saranac Lake lottery winners go public today in Plattsburgh

SARANAC LAKE — New York State Lottery officials will be in Plattsburgh today to announce that Catherine and Roger Courcelle of Saranac Lake are the winners of last weekend's \$2.5 million Lotto jackpot.

Lottery officials were expected to present the winners during a press conference at noon today at Champlain Center North in front of Service Merchandise, a lottery spokesperson said today.

The Courcelles did not publicly announce their winnings previously because they wanted to confirm the numbers on their ticket with state lottery offices.

The ticket was sold to Catherine Courcelle at the Saranac Lake News Room on Broadway here. The winning numbers were selected in the quick-pick by the lottery machine.



STRIKE UP THE BAND! — The United States Army Field Band and Soldiers Chorus will appear at the Saranac Lake High School Gym at 3 p.m. Sunday. The band will perform musical pieces ranging from opera to patriotic medleys. Admission is free, but tickets are needed and can be picked up at the Adirondack Daily Enterprise, 61 Broadway, Saranac Lake.

(Enterprise Photo Provided)

ADK's master plan seeks relief for High Peaks

By ELLEN BALLOU
Enterprise Staff Writer

LAKE PLAICD — After approving a local law to place scenic preservation districts over a few areas in the town, the North Elba Town Board also heard a report from the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) concerning its plans near Heart Lake.

The Town Board Tuesday unanimously approve a local law to place scenic preservation overlay designations over the Uihlein Farms, and the Hart Farm property which were previously thought to have the protection, until the local open space advisory committee discovered the designation was not in place.

Kim Daby, chairman of the committee, explained that the designation would not preclude the owners from subdividing the land, or even developing, but would rather only require Planning Board approval of proposals. Owners of the property are not opposed to the protection, according to Daby.

There was no one who spoke against the plan at the meeting. In other business, Will Janeway, of the Adirondack Mountain Club, presented the board with the club's master plan for the area around Heart Lake.

He said that the plan had been two years in the making, and is finally up to where Adirondack Park Agency staff will present it to the commissioners for consideration. The club owns about 640 acres near Mount Jo off the Adirondack Loj Road, also known as the Heart Lake Road, and is at the most heavily used entrance to the High Peaks Wilderness Area.

The master plan is intended to "provide a guide for the stewardship and use of the Adirondack Mountain Club's Heart Lake Property over the next ten years," according to the executive summary of the plan.

"The plan also provides for a number of elements which will assist the state in its management of the High Peaks Wilderness Area and reduce adverse impacts on the HPWA. These include:

- Efforts to better manage parking by relocating the parking lot and limiting the total number of overnight parking spaces;
- provide more education to backcountry users through conversion of the High Peaks Information Center to a dedicated education center and construction of a new HPIC building;
- provide greater emphasis on backcountry stewardship by expansion of the club's trail-maintenance and other volunteer stewardship programs;
- assist in management of backcountry use by expanding the camping area to replace spaces anticipated to be relocated from Marcy Dam and continue to promote an alternative to camping in the backcountry;
- provide day-use alternatives to use of the HPWA through continued maintenance and public use of the club's various trails including the Mt. Jo trail."

The state's State Land Master Plan for the area, called for the closing of the South Meadow trail in the late '70s. The updated SLMP, according to Janeway, waives that closing in favor of camping at South Meadows rather than at Marcy Dam which lies deeper within the wilderness area.

Some members of the Club believe that the state can't close one area

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Round 2 for candidates

Tonight's presidential debate format may spark fireworks

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Questioning by undecided voters could spark a few more surprises during tonight's second presidential debate, while President Bush searches anew for the elusive breakthrough he needs to reignite his campaign.

For Bush, stalled in the polls behind Democrat Bill Clinton, the pressing goal was to make a significant gain to carry into Monday's debate finale in Michigan — the curtain raiser for the final two weeks of the campaign.

But history is on the Arkansas governor's side: no modern candidate has lost the election with as big a lead this close to Election Day — now just 19 days away.

The latest CBS-New York Times poll, published today, showed that Bush's attacks on Clinton's credibility weren't changing voters' minds. The poll gave Clinton 47 percent, Bush 34 percent and Ross Perot 10 percent in its survey of 854 registered voters. That's unchanged from a CBS-Times poll conducted 10 days ago. The poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Perot's against-the-odds candidacy likely was derailed a bit by running mate James Stockdale's unsteady showing in the vice presidential contest, but even analysts who discount Perot as serious force in the race say tonight's more relaxed format could help the Texas businessman.

Clinton's task was to defend his lead without appearing too overconfident or cautious, and Democrats said they expected Bush to pick up where Vice President Dan Quayle left off Tuesday night: savaging Clinton's trustworthiness and casting the Democrat as an eager taxer.

"We assume that's what he will do, but it doesn't get you votes," said Clinton's communications director George Stephanopoulos. "You can't win an election simply by tearing your opponent down with smears and distortions. But Bush can't defend his record and he can't offer a vision for the future."

Republicans and some other analysts praised Quayle's performance Tuesday night in Atlanta for landing repeated blows to Clinton on the credibility issue.

"I'll try my hardest to do as well as he did — it was first class," Bush said as he greeted Quayle at the White House on Wednesday, when the president also worked in 90 minutes of mock debating.

For all of Quayle's volleys, however, Republicans said only Bush could significantly erode Clinton's

lead because people focus less on the vice presidential choices. Many questioned whether Bush can succeed on the same track as his vice president.

"He's the guy who said 'Read my lips,'" said Republican strategist John Sears, "and education president and kinder, gentler nation. His own record on trust is not pure so I don't think it gets you anywhere."

In their first encounter Sunday, Clinton, Perot and Bush fielded questions from a panel of journalists.

Clinton miffed by state dept. search of his personal file

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats are demanding that the State Department fully explain its search of U.S. embassy files for Clinton's personal records.

The State Department, while defending the investigation of Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth M. Tampa, said Clinton's personal records.

Spokesman Richard Boescher said the department had been searching for Clinton's passport file in Stuttgart, Md.

"I absolutely feel there is no inappropriate behavior," Boescher said at the department's daily press briefing.

The searches were tracked off by Freedom of Information requests filed by the House news papers, ABC, The Associated Press and other news organizations.

"You can't win an election simply by tearing your opponent down with smears and distortions. But Bush can't defend his record and he can't offer a vision for the future."

A State Department official sought to accelerate and protect of public response for information on Clinton's file before the election.

In a Sept. 28 memo obtained by The Washington Post, Norman Evans, a department manager at the department's FOIA office, alerted officials within the office to three requests for information about Clinton's years in Oxford University.

Due to the presidential election on Nov. 3, these requests

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King cites accomplishments, seeks less gov't regulation if given second term

By KATHLEEN SCOTT VAUGHN
Enterprise Staff Writer

SARANAC LAKE — Calling New York "one of the most over-regulated states," Assemblyman James King says fewer Albany dictums and more mandate relief will help get the state and North Country region moving again.

King, R-Ticonderoga, is running for re-election in the 109th Assembly District after his first two years in office. He is running against Conservative candidate David Sawyer of Glens Falls. The 109th District is comprised of all of Warren and Essex counties and parts of Clinton and Franklin counties, including all of Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake.

In the past two years, he's gotten things accomplished in Albany while also listening to the concerns of and helping his constituents, King said Tuesday during an editorial meeting with the Enterprise.

"In my first year I got through more bills than any other freshman assemblyman," King said. Included in the bills were an economic development zone for Fulton County, which used to be 109th district until lines were redrawn during redistricting this year. He also sponsored legislation for the Moses Ludington Hospital and the National Sports Academy in Lake Placid.

Among his other accomplishments during his term were being "accessible to everyone" in his district, and getting to know his territory, he said.

King said even though he is a part of the Republican minority in the Assembly, it is important to have a Republican representing the region, noting that New York City Democrats control the Assembly.

"It's a different way of looking at things down there (New York City)," King said. For example, city residents aren't as concerned about gasoline taxes as those in the North Country since city-dwellers

often rely on public transportation. Referring to Sawyer running as a Conservative, King said he didn't believe a fringe candidate could

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AND DOWN SHE COMES — Frank Sears, of Sears Contracting Inc., operates the back-hoe himself Wednesday to bring down the remains of the burned Lake Forest building on Lake Placid Club Drive. The structure was destroyed in a suspicious fire on Oct. 1. Police and fire officials are still investigating the fire, one of eight arson attempts at the property in the past year.

(Enterprise Photo — Ellen Ballou)



James King