

Emergency group out to solve shortages

Talks of classes to train EMTs and firefighters

BY JENIFFER GRAHAM
For The Dominion Post

KINGWOOD — EMT and firefighter classes could soon be available close to home for Preston County residents.

The county's Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) re-

cently discussed the possibility of holding evening classes at Preston Memorial Hospital to train both. The committee is gathering information about funding, classroom availability and other necessities.

"We could present it to the board this year and get a course started next year. An adult evening class could possibly be done this year," said Rodger Marshall, facilities maintenance director for Preston County Schools and an LEPC member.

Dr. Fred Conley agreed evening classes would be a good idea.

Pam Thomas, president of

KAMP Ambulance Squad, and Marilyn Metheny, president of the Terra Alta Ambulance Squad, said the county needs more EMTs and paramedics.

"I believe it's a good idea," Thomas said. "There is a shortage of EMTs and medics, not just here but nationwide. We put in a lot of overtime because we don't have enough EMT's and medics to cover the shifts."

Thomas said KAMP could use an additional two or three medics and five more EMTs.

Reedsville Volunteer Fire Department Chief Scott Spiker said

the program could benefit county fire departments as well.

"I believe it's a great idea. We're short on volunteers," he said. Spiker said his department has 15 members, compared to the 25 that would be ideal.

"The average age of our members is 40. We're not attracting the 18-, 19-, 20-year-old members we need," he said.

Matthew Clarkson, Fellowsville fire chief, said his squad is short on volunteers too.

"I think having the classes is a good idea," he said. "It is a good way to get younger people in-

terested in volunteering."

Metheny said she would support training for both EMTs and firefighters. "We talked about this at meetings several years ago. There aren't enough people to cover our shifts."

She believes a four-year course for high school students would be beneficial. Students could take classes, pass the exams, graduate and find jobs as EMTs.

Spiker said Reedsville has trouble covering days, when most volunteers are working their day

SEE SOLVE, 7-B



Waxing poetic

Join The Aurora Project in welcoming Marc Harshman, West Virginia's Poet Laureate, to Aurora. Harshman will lead a two-part poetry program Saturday: from Poetry reading, from 11 a.m.-noon, and a poetry writing workshop, from 1-2 p.m.

The cost is \$10 per session. Contact the Aurora Project at 304-735-3620 or email info@aurora-project.org for more information and reservations.

Harshman is an award-winning children's author and former educator, and is West Virginia's seventh poet laureate. Learn more about Harshman and his work by visiting poetlaureate.wv.gov.

School prep

The Preston County Health Department reminds us that the first day of the new school year is quickly approaching. Do your pre-K, kindergarten, seventh- and 12th-graders have the required immunizations?

If your child has no medical insurance coverage for vaccines or if you have other questions, call the health department, at 304-329-0096.

Blues Brothers

Blues Brothers tribute artists The Soul Men will be at the Preston Arts Center on Friday. The Soul Men's performance is billed as a fast-paced, high-energy, audience-participation routine. Info about the artists: thesoulmen.com.

Doors will open at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 7. Advance tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students. Tickets are \$5 more at the door, if still available. Purchase tickets by calling 304-376-1435 or going to Fawley Music, Morgantown; The Book Mark'et, Oakland, Md.; or Brew Ha Ha Cafe in Kingwood.

Crafternoon

A free handicraft workshop for children ages 3-12 will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday at the Kingwood Public Library. For more information about this colorful workshop, which will include projects for all age groups, call the library, at 304-329-1499.

ITEMS FOR Preston Footnotes can be submitted to kingwood@dominionpost.com.



Energy expressions

William Wotring/The Dominion Post
Kaylee Williams reads a book during the Energy Express program Thursday, at South Preston school.

Summer program at 3 county sites

SOUTH PRESTON Energy Express' free Community Wellness Bash and Giveaway will be held from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursday, at the school. There will be giveaways of new children's clothing and books, games and activities. Info: 304-290-2882.

BY KATHY PLUM

The Dominion Post

TUNNELTON — The brightly colored yarn word webs on the floor and the pup tent where a mentor and student are reading to one another are among the first clues this isn't regular school.

This is Energy Express, a free, eight-week summer reading and nutrition program sponsored in Preston County by After School Explorers, the WVU Extension Service of Preston County and Preston County Schools.

Children in kindergarten through fifth grade receive breakfast and lunch, and are tutored by AmeriCorps mentors. The goal is to prevent loss of knowledge over the summer break and ensure kids are eating well.

Energy Express has been offered at sites in Preston County for more than 10 years. This year there are sites at Kingwood Elementary, South Pre-



William Wotring/The Dominion Post
A painting decorates the South Preston school.

ston and Terra Alta.

"We're small but growing," South Preston Site Supervisor Ashley Matheny said. It's the first time recently for a program at the school in southern Preston County, and 10-12 students attend daily.

On a recent day, AmeriCorps mentors Jenny Armstrong, Hailea Cress and Shalee DeWitt were working with students on art projects to help with reading comprehension and doing one-on-one reading.

Word webs — colorful yarn connecting words — on the floor and word walls — lists of words under each letter of the alphabet — adorn each classroom.

"They really use the word walls a lot, and I think that helps them with their writing

and reading," Matheny said.

One-on-one reading time can be in a tent or other special area.

Armstrong, 21, will be a senior at Davis and Elkins College this fall. She is majoring in theater and English education.

Armstrong said the most important lesson she learned this summer "is to be as encouraging as I can."

Cress, 18, who will start her freshman year at WVU this fall, said her biggest takeaway has been to be patient.

A biology major, she said that, "even though it's tough, it's worth it."

DeWitt, 18, is headed to Fairmont State University this fall as an elementary education ma-

SEE EXPRESS, 7-B

\$10.5K contract awarded to fix wrestling barn

Youth and school teams use 'deteriorating' facility

BY MADISON FLECK

The Dominion Post

KINGWOOD — The Preston County Commission approved a \$10,500 contract with The Mills Group for a concept design and will begin getting estimates to repair the wrestling "barn" near

Preston High. The Mills Group said it hopes to preserve the character of the building while also improving the structure to suit the needs of current and future users.

"It's very proudful for Preston County to be able to wrestle in a barn, it's pretty wild," Mills Group Director of Sustainable Design Ryan Hess said.

The building is used by the Preston Mat Club, a youth wrestling program. According to longtime former Preston High wrestling head coach Michael Contic, the PHS wrestling team and a unified wrestling program for Preston middle schools will both use the building this fall.

"The building itself is deteriorating like any old building is deteriorating and needs fixed up," Contic said. "The building is very solid, but it just needs physical repairs."

"This is something we want to try to do, but at the same time, we don't have endless funding," County Administrator Kathy Mace said.

Mat Club head coach Buddy Turner said the building's roof, heating and air conditioning, and plumbing are the group's biggest concerns.

"That's pretty concerning for us," he said. "It's a growing sport, and it's a sport that Preston County kids can have and excel in."

Roughly 100 students used the building during the 2015-'16 academic year.

The building is owned by the commission, which hopes to get information from all who may need the building in the future. Plans are being discussed by the county parks commission to build a new structure that could include space for wrestling.

PEOPLE OF PRESTON

Celeste Rankin

Where you live: Arthurdale.

Occupation: I've thought about becoming a chef or a DNR officer.

Education: High school.

Family: My mom, dad, grandma and pap, sister Trinity and we'll throw my boyfriend in there.

Hobbies: I like the outdoors. I like to go fishing, hunting, kayaking — that's my newest hobby. I like photography, art, and cooking.

Pet peeve: People who chew really loud.

How long have you lived in Preston County: All my life — 18 years.

Favorite thing about Preston County: It's beautiful. I love the scenic overlooks, and I love fall because it is so pretty.

One thing you would change about Preston County: The roads. But I don't think anything else.

Favorite Preston County place: Fairfax ponds, in Arthurdale. It's wide open space, and it's very beautiful and secluded.

