

School Board asked to reduce spring sports schedule to save \$\$

Banks school board and administrators had an intense discussion, at a special meeting February 23, about the current school year budget, which business manager Simon Levear calls a "moving target."

Levear led the board through an almost week-by-week summary of conditions affecting the '08-'09 budget and the administrative team's actions to keep the budget in balance. The Banks budget was built, and adopted by the board, before negotiations with labor unions were complete. Completion of these negotiations resulted in a shortfall of \$155,000 before the school year even started. This initial increase in expenses was absorbed into the budget with minimal effort by the administrative team. As the economy slowed in the fall, and the state began issuing predictions that schools would receive less money this year, budget cuts

became more difficult and more painful.

School principals Jim Foster (high school), Bob Huston (elementary) and Mark Everett (junior high), and student services director Shelly Mitchell work closely with Levear and superintendent Marv Ott to balance the districts budget. Levear presented the team's efforts, explaining to the board when and how large adjustments have been made throughout the district. Though Ott was not present, each administrator was able to offer specific examples of major cuts in nearly every department. Levear said that the team made an early decision to keep a full program for students as long as possible. In addition, the team was also bound by a board policy to maintain an ending fund balance of five percent. Levear told the board that the current budget shortfall should be met by reducing the number of school days and reductions in the spring sports schedule.

The board appeared con-

fused initially about how to respond. Levear told the board that the political nature of sports programs led him to seek input from the board. He explained that up to five days could be cut and still meet state requirements for instructional hours, but the district would have to seek a waiver of that requirement if additional days

were cut. When pressed about the response from staff he told the board that representatives of both unions (certified staff and classified staff) had indicated that staff would be willing to negotiate less pay for fewer days work. Asked about the timing of the request and the lack of a detailed plan showing proposed changes to the calen-

dar, Levear said that he was looking for an agreement to the concept of cutting days to balance the budget.

At the time of the meeting, Levear told the board that, after reducing the spring sports, the budget would still have a deficit of \$224,000. He told the board that about \$28,000 per day

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Boy Scouts will celebrate Mar. 6

The Banks Blue & Gold Banquet for Boy Scouts to celebrate scouting will be held March 6, at 6:00 p.m. at Banks Elementary School. The banquet is for all Boy Scouts, from Cub Scouts to Venturing Scouts.

Food collected

Banks Cub Scout pack #581 collected 187 pounds of food at their recent Family Game Night. The food was donated to the Sonrise Food Bank.



Banks' Hometown Tribute, on February 28, included anthems, prayers, a proclamation by Mayor Kinsky, Boy Scout Troop 581, even dessert. There was a moment of silence for Army Chief Warrant Officer Joshua Tillery, formerly of Banks, who was killed January 26 in Iraq. The evening was a tribute to Banks' veterans, both past and present.

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