

# Banks School Board works hard to find budget cuts

Banks school board continued its grim task of deciding which staff and programs to eliminate or reduce in next year's budget, during their April meetings. Fortunately, at regular board meetings presentations from a variety of programs provide a little relief, as did a presentation by high school history teacher Ben Buchanan of students' trip to Italy during spring break.

During a workshop prior to the business meeting, business manager Simon Levear report-

ed that the final \$69,000 necessary to balance the budget for the current school year has been resolved by negotiation with staff.

Levear gave a brief presentation about the reduction of the state school fund resulting in a revenue loss of at least \$760,000 and possibly as much as \$1,240,000. Both Levear and Superintendent Marv Ott stressed that the administrative team will make recommendations to the budget committee, but the board will make

the final decision. The administrative team will develop a proposed budget for the 2009-10 school year, and superintendent Ott will deliver the budget message on May 14 at the committee's first meeting of the year. A second meeting, to review the budget, is tentatively scheduled for May 28. The budget approved by the committee will be presented to the board for adoption on June 8, at the regular board meeting. At that point the board can make additional changes if desired.

In order to inform the public and elicit their comments, the board previously asked the administrative team to develop a detailed list of potential reductions. Every administrator iden-

tified lists of items "on the chopping block", with the dollar amount of each and a description of the potential effects of reducing that item. The potential reductions totaled nearly \$2.3 million, allowing for and requiring difficult decisions. Respondents were asked to select whether or not to reduce each item on the survey. The survey was distributed at the April 27 meeting; the results will be compiled by Levear and presented at the May 11 meeting.

A lively give and take discussion followed the presentation of the survey. It was explained that federal funds can be used only according to very specific rules and regulations. Several

**See School on page 14**

# Arrest made in High School fire

The Washington County Sheriff's office arrested a 13-year-old seventh grader at Banks Middle School, after new information was received regarding a fire at Banks High School in September, 2008.

The fire caused approximately \$20,000 worth of damage. At the time, the cause was unknown.

The boy was arrested April 24, and turned over to the custody of the Washington County Juvenile Department; he was subsequently released to his parents. The investigation continues, but no further arrests are expected.

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