

The Martha's Vineyard Times

News in Brief

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NSTAR works to remove tree limbs and restore power on Tuesday night. Photo by Rick Mello

Truck brings down powerline, causes blackout

A large truck pulled over on County Road for an Oak Bluffs fire engine rushing to a call and hit a low hanging tree limb that fell on a power line, causing a brief power blackout Tuesday to sections of Oak Bluffs and Edgartown.

The truck hit several over-hanging tree limbs, which then detached from the tree and fell onto the power line, said Oak Bluffs Fire Chief Dennis Alley. He said there were no sparks or fire.

The accident occurred at about 8 pm and the blackout lasted for roughly an hour. An NSTAR Electric spokesperson said that approximately 3,400 customers were affected, mostly in Oak Bluffs and the surrounding areas.

MC Co-Op Bank awards spring grants

The Permanent Endowment Fund announced that the Martha's Vineyard Co-operative Bank Fund has selected ten local organizations and programs as recipients of their spring financial grants. The individual donations range from \$500 to \$2,000 and total \$10,000.

The spring 2006 grant recipients are: the Aquinnah Cultural Center, Hospice of Martha's Vineyard, the M.V. Chapter of the American Red Cross, M.V. Community Services, M.V. Hebrew Center, M.V. Hospital General Operating Fund, M.V. Hospital Building Fund, M.V. Rod & Gun Club for Camp Jabberwocky, the Oak Bluffs Library, specifically for reframing artwork,

and the YMCA of Martha's Vineyard.

The Martha's Vineyard Cooperative Bank and the Permanent Endowment Fund have been working together for a number of years, and the alliance is valued by both entities.

Richard J. Leonard, M.V. Co-op Bank president, said. "Our ongoing commitment to support a wide variety of organizations that contribute to the quality of life on our island is greatly enhanced through the joint resources of the Permanent Endowment Fund for Martha's Vineyard and The Martha's Vineyard Co-operative Bank Charitable Fund. This kind of collaborative initiative helps to keep our community strong."

Deborah Hale, Chair of the Permanent Endowment Fund concurred. "Our ongoing relationship with the Cooperative Bank has definitely allowed both agencies to reach deeper within our community to assist Islanders in need".



Photo by Ben Scott

Asphalt artists

MassHighway maintenance workers performed their annual re-stripping chores this week along some of the Vineyard's state-owned roads. From left, Michael Evilacqua, Anthony Zarella, and John Amarante set fresh stripes on Beach Road near Five Corners.

Five to vie for Oak Bluffs selectmen seat

The race for the seat on the Oak Bluffs board of selectmen vacated by Michael Dutton is shaping up to be a lively summer contest. As of yesterday's deadline, five people including one former selectman had returned nomination papers to compete in the special election that will be held on Aug. 8.

The five candidates are: Herbert Combra, a former selectman and past highway superintendent; Kenneth DeBettencourt, a former member of the board of health and conservation commission; Ron DiOrio, president of Habitat for Humanity of Martha's

Vineyard; David Morris, a school committee member; and Christine Todd, a local realtor.

Mr. DeBettencourt, Mr. DiOrio and Ms. Todd have all run for seats on the board in the past. In the April selectman's race, Ms. Todd came surprisingly close to beating longtime incumbent Roger Wey, losing by only four votes after a hand recount.

The soon-to-be-filled town administrator position will add another layer to the consistently tumultuous dynamic of the Oak Bluffs political landscape. Casey Sharpe, the current town administrator who will serve until July 15, said five people submitted applications for her job by last Friday's deadline. She said some of the applicants are from off Island.

The screening committee, consisting of Ms. Sharpe, Anne Gallagher, Harvey Beth, Paul Strauss, and Kenneth Walker will meet tomorrow to discuss the candidates.

Tisbury police chief search continues

The Tisbury police chief search committee completed telephone interviews last week with six candidates, narrowed from a field of 17 who applied for the job in April.

Town administrator John Bugbee said the committee will conduct in-person interviews of the six candidates over the next two to three weeks, then make its recommendations to the Tisbury selectmen in about three weeks to a month.

Tisbury Police Chief Saulnier officially retired from his post on June 9 after submitting a letter to the selectmen a few weeks before. The selectmen appointed patrolman Tim Stobie as acting chief of police as of June 10, to allow time for the search committee to complete its process. Selectman chairman Tristan Israel said last week he expects it probably will be July before a new chief is hired.

Chief Saulnier had been working under an expired contract since June 30, 2005, after he and the selectmen failed to reach an agreement on salary in discussions last spring. Under his contract's terms, Mr. Saulnier was entitled to one-year's notice, allowing him to stay on the job until July 1, 2006.

Although Chief Saulnier could have left his post at any time during that year, negotiations remained open. The selectmen took no steps to formally plan for his departure until January, when they officially notified him they were ending negotiations. They advertised the police chief position in March and appointed a search committee in April.

Last month, the Tisbury and Oak Bluffs selectmen held joint meetings to discuss the possibility of sharing a police chief. Oak Bluffs Police chief Erik Blake expressed his willingness to be considered for the job. A few weeks later, however, he withdrew his name as a possible candidate, and the Oak Bluffs selectmen took the shared chief idea off the table. They did agree to continue to explore the possibility for the future with the Tisbury selectmen.

Menemsha installs a new concrete floating dock

It's not quite done, but the concrete floating dock in Menemsha is almost ready to accommodate boatowners, both yachtsmen and commercial fishermen.

Unlike the dock it replaces, the new dock floats on the tide, making boarding boats easier. To get the concrete structure to float the innovative dock uses a complex design, filled with specially manufactured flotation material encased by the concrete skin. The dock is 9 feet wide and 36 inches tall, 18 of which are submerged. It is made of 10 sections attached by wailers, pieces of treated lumber attached by galvanized steel rods. Although the new dock does not add tie-up space, it offers upgraded electrical service.

Construction began in March, and only electricity and water are not complete yet, but they will be soon, according to Chilmark harbormaster Dennis Jason.

A survey of the old dock disclosed extensive deterioration. When the West Dock was built in 1969, the town dredged and filled over a pre-existing sand bar in order to shape the dock. The survey found that the wooden bulkhead reinforcing the dock and containing the fill had begun to rot. Chilmark selectman Riggs Parker, designated by his colleagues as the harbor selectman, explained that, "The wood rotted and began to fall into the harbor. The fill began to seep into the harbor, and the walls were at risk of collapsing. So, we hired a company to put steel bulkhead on the outside of the wood. In order to do this, we had to take away the old wooden dock that was attached to the bulkhead."

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