

WDBC Newsmakers

Oct - Dec. 2020

October 2020

1 Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD

The ISD is closing its Learning Center school building due to COVID-19 spread. Talked about how school districts are handling a large amount of quarantines.

Ed Leagult, Delta County Economic Development Alliance Director

Talked about the 83 local businesses that received state grants due to COVID-19.

Talked about the process of awarding grants to local businesses and the need for the funds.

2 Escanaba Mayor Marc Tall

Talked about the city's interest in selling the building leased by the Escanaba Downtown Development Authority to the DDA. It follows talk by the city to move the DDA to city hall.

5 State Sen. Ed McBroom

Talked about the State Supreme Court ruling that declared the Governor's executive orders under COVID-19 emergency based on a 1946 riot act unconstitutional. The governor also moved the U.P. back from Phase 5 to Phase 4 on the COVID-19 Safe Return plan.

6 Sue Gartland, Delta Animal Shelter

The animal shelter remains closed to the public but still adopted 110 animals in September. She talked about the process of adopted. The shelter also took in 92 animals surrendered to the shelter in September.

7 Andrea Nummillen, Delta County Aioiort Manager

Talked about their choice for Essential Air Carrier. It remains the same, Skywest Airlines, with the possibility of flying to Minneapolis as well as Detroit. There were three applications.

Dave Lord, OSF St. Francis Hospital President; Lacey Crabb, Chief Nursing Officer and William Hook, medical director

Talked about the challenge of operating the hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic. Shared what they are seeing and explained their testing capability. Hospital planned for surge planning and it continues.

8 Congressman Jack Bergman

Talked about the need to balance personal safety and economy when it comes to state restrictions. Says Yoopers are strong and can deal with the pandemic.

Vickie Michael, Executive Director of the Delta Chamber of Commerce
The annual dinner scheduled for that night was cancelled. She gave the year-in-review. Says the year was going well before COVID-19 hit. Talked about the challenges businesses face during the pandemic. Talked about cancelling the U.P. State Fair in August.

9 Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD
The Learning Center remains closed due to increasing COVID-19 cases in Delta County. Teachers have professional development this week. This year it is online.

State Sen. Ed McBroom
Talked about the plot to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer that was uncovered this week. Talked about how the Legislature and law enforcement was going to be targeted. Talked about the governor's need to work with the legislature during the pandemic.

12 Julie Mallard, United Way of Delta County and Kyle Rambo, Catholic Social Services
Mallard talked about the difficulty of non-profits raising funds during the COVID-19 pandemic. Talked about businesses stepping up to help. Rambo talked about the mental health issues dug in the pandemic. Says caseworkers are overwhelmed by referrals. Child sexual and neglect abuse cases are up.

Coby Fletcher, Escanaba School Superintendent
Studenta are back in class following a two week closed at the Jr and Sr High School due to COVID-19 numbers and spread in the building. He says it is too early to tell if it worked.

13 Brad Mantella, Gladstone City Commission
The 9th Street Project is completed. City Commission approved a chase order to lower the budget for the project. It came in under budget. Talked about how the project changes the community. It replaced the water system and road.

14 Brett Gardiner, Delta County Prosecutor
Talked about the growing number of child sexual and neglect abuse cases in the county. Talked about the court holding welfare checks at homes.

Rory Mattson, Delta Conservation District
Talked about the trust fund grant for the proposed ATV campground at Rapid River Falls Park. He showed the county board revised plans for the project to meet the budget limitations. Talked about the need to have and ATV campground in the U.P.

15 Emily DeSalvo, Delta County Administrator
She says they are concerned about hospital services as COVID-19 number climb in the county. Says there is a sense of urgency among healthcare workers for the public to follow Coronavirus protocols. Says there is no need to add more to the county plan to respond to the pandemic.

15 Diana Deno and Darlene Jensen, Pray for Law Enforcement event
They are organizing an outside Pray for Law Enforcement event at Escanaba Public Safety and Gladstone Public Safety. Feel law enforcement need the respect they deserve.

16 Patrick Jordan, Escanaba City Manager
The city council approved that parade organizers can plan for the annual Christmas Parade in Escanaba. Talked about ways that the parade could be held. There was concern that the health department recommended not holding the parade.

Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD
Schools are concerned with ability to stay open with increasing COVID-19 numbers. With three COVID-19 positive students at the ISD, they came from separate schools so no evidence of spread there.

19 Tom Casperson, former State Senator
Casperson sponsored legislation that put Proposal 1 on the ballot to change the funding allocations for the Natural Resources Trust Fund. It puts more emphasis on projects rather than acquisition.

Nicole Fitch, Northern Lights YMCA
Talked about a Y program to help people reboot during the COVID-19 pandemic. All of the YMCA's in the U.P. are working together for the six week program. The first week is about movement.

20 Jay Kulbertis, Gladstone, Rapid River School Superintendent
Says dealing with COVID-19 has been a work in process. It has been difficult to make plans with changing issues. The superintendents in the area meet weekly with health department officials.

Coby Fletcher, Escanaba School Superintendent
Says the two closures helped to lower quarantine numbers and slow things down but COVID-19 numbers are increasing in the county. Says the online learning worked well.

21 Al Ettenhofer, U.P. Whitetails Association
Still holding raffle drawing in November but not the fall banquet. Talked about the difficulty of raising money during the pandemic. Talked about the various ways they help local activities and groups.

Ron Miaso, Gladstone Downtown Development Authority Director
Talked about the final walk through of the 9th Street Project. It is the end of three years to complete the project. Talked about the dramatic change of the part of Gladstone. Talked about the struggle of downtown businesses under COVID-19 restrictions.

22 Nancy Prezwrocki, Delta County Clerk

Talked about the high number of absentee ballot requests and how it's affecting the cities and townships. Talked about the frustration from voters that they are not getting requested ballots. Talked about the preparation for the November election.

Laura Coleman, Bay College President

Talked about the plan to operate the college under COVID-19 restrictions. Operations include in-person and online learning. More classes have been moved to online as the numbers rise in the county but no issues with spread at the college.

23 Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD

The ISD is in "good spot" with COVID-19 transmission. Says they could be at full staff on Monday. Says mitigation efforts are working. Coronavirus numbers continue to be concerning.

26 Nicole Fitch, Northern Lights YMCA

Talked about good response to the Y challenge. It shows it was needed to get people active. First week was movement. This week is rest.

Alex Norton, Salvation Army

Talked about how to sign up for Thanksgiving dinners. It is in response to the cancellation of the Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Also, there is a need for bell ringers. The Red Kettle campaign is starting early this year due to COVID-19.

27 Eric Buckman, Gladstone City Commission and Brad Mantella, Gladstone City Commissioner

Talked about the final walk through of the 9th Street Project. Talked about a former City Commissioner who is forming a group to object to the special assessment that was used to pay for part of the 9th Street Project.

Mark Wells, a member of the USA hockey 1980 Olympic team

He has moved to Escanaba. He is working on a book about his life. He talked being a part of the team and what it meant to beat the Soviet team during the Olympics.

28 John DePue, Department of Natural Resources

Gave report on the white nose syndrome among bats in the Upper Peninsula. Talked about efforts to find ways to protect bats including the pushing of cold air into mine shaft.

State Rep. Beau LaFave

Talked about the need for economic recovery damaged by COVID-19 restrictions. Talked about the banning of guns at polling places. He does not plan to open carry at the polls but feels the ban is a way to suppress voters.

Sue Roll, Bonifas Arts Center

Talked about the annual meeting held online and the review of the past year before and after COVID-19. The Bonifas remains financial sound. Talked about the future of the arts center.

29 First Lt. Gregg Cunningham, Gladstone State Police Post Commander
Says they are not expecting any problems during the November election. Talked about the problem of substance abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic and how it is affecting traffic safety. He attended an online seminar on the issue. One dealt with driving under the influence of drugs, including marijuana, and speed.

Renne Ritcher, State Representative candidate for the 108th District
They have been reaching out through online, phone and social media to supporters. Campaign was not what she was expecting before the Coronavirus pandemic. Talked about issues important to her during the campaign including guns in polling places and fresh water protection.

30 Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD
Four schools are now closed due to COVID-19 numbers in the county. Escanaba schools are looking at the possibility of an alternating day schedule.

November 2020

2 Nicole Fitch, Northern Lights YMCA
Week 3 of the Strong Challenge. This week is to unplug.

State Sen. Ed McBroom
He takes exception to new state orders that require restaurants to take names and phone numbers of those eating at the business for the state to use for contact tracing. He found the move disturbing.

Keith Whitman, USA Natural Luge Team and Torrey Cookman, USA Natural Luge Athlete
They are preparing not to go to Europe for competitions in January and February. They will be practicing at the Neguanee track this year as precautions from COVID-19.

3 Sue Gartland, Delta Animal Shelter
Talked about shutting down extra activities and fundraising but they are happy with the number of adoptions even though are not open to the public. People can make appointments.

Jesse Randall, director of the MSU Biomass Innovation Center
Talks about shifting the priorities from the tree research facility to more forest management programs such as wildlife, food plots, ginseng, maple syrup, etc.

4 Emily DeSalvo, Delta County Administrator
Talked about the election last night and the two new commissioners that were elected. Talked about the legacy of Dave Rivard who was defeated. Talked about her evaluation in her first year as administrator.

Nancy Przewrocki, Delta County Clerk

Talked about the election. Turnout was heavy. No major issues during the election. Talked about how they addressed the COVID-19 restrictions.

5 Dave Moyle, Delta County Commissioner

He won re-election but in a new party. Moyle switched from Democrat to Republican. Talked about the future of the county board with two new commissioners.

Ed Oswald, Delta County Sheriff

They have been able to keep COVID-19 out of the Delta County Jail. Talked about how they have been able to it. He is feeling poorly and taken a COVID test. Talked about new rules to let people out of jail.

6 Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD

He tested positive for COVID-19. He has been meeting virtually with staff from home. Talked about impact on teachers at area school districts.

Patrick Jordan, Escanaba City Manager

The Escanaba Christmas Parade will not be held this year. Concerned about people's freedoms being taken away under COVID-19 restrictions. They are meeting today to determine how city hall will be operating.

9 Nicole Fitch, Northern Lights YMCA

Week 4 of the Strong Challenge is rest. She says it reduces stress and improves overall health.

Julie Mallard, United Way of Delta County and Tonya Ettenhofer, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Bay Area

Talked about raising funds during the Coronavirus pandemic. The United Way has been able to raise funds for those struggling to raise funds. Ettenhofer talked about attempting to run a program despite COVID. Not able to hold mentoring programs but still a need for Bigs.

10 Coby Fletcher, Escanaba School Superintendent

The Escanaba Schools will be going to an Alternating Day Schedule starting Nov. 16. Explained how the process would work. The goal is to reduce the number of quarantines.

Rory Mattson, Delta Conservation District

Talked about the proposed deer regulations being considered by Natural Resource Commission. He has concerns with several aspects of the plan.

Dave Schaaf, veteran

Talks about his service as part of Veteran's Day. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. Talked about his experience as part of the Upper Peninsula Honor Flight.

11 Brett Gardiner, Delta County Prosecutor

He won re-election unopposed. Talked about how he has done as prosecutor since his appointment to the position. Jury trials are also being postponed again in December.

Dave Lord, OSF St. Francis Hospital President; Bill Hook, director of medical services and Lacey Crabb, chief nursing officer

Talked about being near capacity. Unable to transfer patients to nearby facilities. Feel the surge will be going to drop in early December.

12 Brad Mantella, Gladstone City Commissioner

Talked about how the city handled the election. Talked about the budget amendment that commission approved.

13 Gov. Gretchen Whitmer

From her press conference talking about the status of COVID-19 in Michigan and the need to move high school to online learning and banning in-person dining and bars and closing entertainment businesses for two weeks.

16 Nicole Fitch, Northern Lights YMCA

Week 5 of the Strong Challenge is serve. Talked about embracing community and the need to serve.

17 Coby Fletcher, Escanaba School Superintendent

Talked about closing the Jr and Sr High School to in-person learning under state order just two days after starting an alternating day schedule. K-5 will remain face-to-face.

Bill Hook, director of medical services at OFS St Francis Hospital

He says people can not test themselves out of quarantine. He says it could be leading to an increase in COVID-19 numbers.

Brett Moberg,

Talked about how the new band was doing just before the pandemic. The band, Dousy, plays 80s rock. Talks about the difficulty of being a musician during the pandemic.

18 Emily DeSalvoi, Delta County

Talked about the high numbers of COVID-19 numbers in the county. County facilities and buildings are being closed. The airport remains open.

Jay Kulberis, Superintendent of Gladstone and Rapid River schools

Talked about how they are preparing for closing of the high schools under new state order. Explained how the process will work. Rapid River had already decided to shut down K-12 for the next week

19 Laura Coleman, Bay College President

Bay College is taking finals online during the final week as part of the state shutdown. The college is benefiting from starting earlier this year.

Jim Yoder, U.P. Steam & Gas Engine Association

They are cancelling Christmas in the Village but they are planning to decorate a portion of the facility by the parking lot for people to view from their vehicles. They will still be collecting can food for food pantries that is usually the entrance to the event.

20 Patrick Jordan, Escanaba City Manager

The city is going to be transferring the ownership of the 911 tower to the Central Dispatch Authority. The city is also handling of the operations of central dispatch to the authority.

Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD

Talked about some of the exceptions to the high school closure to ensure students get the services that they need. The rural districts are the most challenged.

23 Nicole Fitch, Northern Lights YMCA

The final week of the Strong Challenge is balance. She talks about the needs to take all of the activities during the past week.

Jay Bostwick and Ron Miaso, Gladstone Downtown Development Authority

Gladstone will hold its tree lighting ceremony but is cancelling the Old Fashioned Christmas program. The city is expanding decorating contest. They talk about how to participate.

Phil Lynch, musician

Talked about his new song, U.P. Life. Talked about how it wrote the song and process of recording it.

24 Rod Stende, general manager of Elmer's County Market

Talked about various food options for Thanksgiving. He brought pumpkin pie to sample.

Lorne Watson, Escanaba Music Teacher

Talked about receiving and arts in residency grant to bring music programs to the school. The program focuses on students writing songs.

25 Tyler Dubord, Escanaba City Council and Shannon Taylor, Hope at the Inn

Talked about ways to provide homeless services in the community. Talked about challenges to providing homeless services during pandemic. Fewer churches are participating. They hope to provide a warming center this winter.

Brand Mantella, Gladstone City Commission

The city has a report to show where its money goes. He went through some of the items.

30 Al Ettenhofer, U.P. Whitetails Association

Talked about proposed deer regulations being considered by the Natural Resources Commission. He talked about Antler Point Restrictions. Antlerless Permits and

crossbows during the late archery season.

State Sen. Ed McBroom

Talked about the death of former State Sen Tom Casperson. He was suffering from lung cancer. Talked about his legacy and the impact he had on the state.

December 2020

1 Sue Gartland, Delta Animal Shelter

She talked about the court case moving forward on seizure of dogs and horses from a puppy mill in Rock. Many of dogs have since given birth putting more pressure on the shelter. They are unable to adopt the animals until the court case is complete.

2 Emily DeSalvo, Delta County Administrator

Talked about the county's response to an increase in COVID-19 numbers. There did not seem to be a bump from Thanksgiving. The county supported an ad to promote the use of masks.

Ed Legault, Delta County Economic Development Alliance

Talked about the opening of applications from businesses to apply for \$10 million in grants. Talked about the process to apply. It aims at restaurants, bars and entertainment venues affected by the current state closures.

Sue Roll, Bonifas Arts Center

Talked about upcoming classes and workshops at the Bonifas. They also talked about online courses. Talked about the Northern Exposure exhibit. No reception. Awards were presented online.

3 Jacklyn Rahn and Sue Clifton, GFWC Women's Club

Talked about the fundraising part of the annual Charity Ball being held online this year because of COVID-19. The purpose of the ball is to raise funds to share with community organizations, especially youth needs.

4 Patrick Jordan, Escanaba City Manager

Talked about parking restrictions put into place Dec. 1 even without snow. City Hall is still closed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Talked about brownfield properties in the city. One was ended when company backed out of the project. Hotel at the former jail site is still moving forward.

Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD

Talked about the chances of the Governor reopening schools. Talked about pros and cons of doing so. For the most part, student participation has been good at area schools during the shutdown of high school buildings.

5 Amy Trooter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs director

Talked about their opposition to amendments to commercial fishing legislation. The bills

were before State Sen. Ed McBroom's Natural Resources Committee.

8 Roy Dalgren, U.P. Trappers Association

Talked about how trapping has been this year. A buyer is in the area picking up furs. They are already making plans for February's workshop in Hermansville. Commented on the delisting of wolves in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Coby Fletcher, Escanaba School Superintendent

Talked about the state extending the closure of high schools in the state. Talked about what it means especially with reopening now just before winter break.

9 Lauren Wickman, Assistant Delta County Prosecutor

Talked about drug issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. She says more people are bringing drugs into the area because fewer people are traveling out of the area.

Scott Zerbel, TV6 Can-a-thon

Talked about how the virtual can-a-thon has been going. People can still donate in the final days of the can-a-thon. Talked about the need for food in the community.

10 Delta County Sheriff Ed Oswald

Talked about the search for a pilot downed on the Hiawatha National Forest. He crashed during practice runs from Wisconsin Air Base. Talked about their roll in the search.

Ed Legault, Delta County Economic Development Alliance

He is willing to work with businesses to prepare for the next rounds of grants to help businesses affected by COVID-19.

11 Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD

The shutdown of high schools is still allowing career technical education to continue. Talked about how they have been operating.

Lisa Lalonde, Downtown Partners in Business

The Super Santa Saturday event is another attempt to help downtown businesses during the Christmas holiday. Black Friday on Tuesday went well. With COVID-19, she says they are hoping the Saturday will be good as well.

14 Bob Burnham, Department of Natural Resources

Talked about the wooded dune and swale property that is up for acquisition by the Natural Resources Trust Fund. The property is on the Garden Peninsula.

Julie Mallard, United Way of Delta County and Alex Norton, Salvation Army

Talked about how the campaign has been going. A mailing will be going to residents in the county. Norton talks about how the need for food is far outweighing anticipation. As fast as food moves in to the pantry, it moves out.

15 Brad Mantella, Gladstone City Commission

Talked about the SAW grant that the city has been working on. It includes analyzing the city's water and wastewater systems

15 Dave Lord, OSF St Francis Hospital president; Lacey Crabb, chief nursing officer and Bill Hook, medical director

Talked about the numbers declining in Delta County. Talked about how to be tested at the hospital. They are concerned with the number of deaths in Mcjigan. The hospital is using a drug to treat some COVID-19 patients.

16 Emily DeSalvo, Delta County Administrator

The county board has extended its state of emergency to help with COVID-19 planning. Talked about the need to keep up on efforts to fight the Coronavirus.

State Rep. Beau LaFave

Talked about his re-election to the state House. Talked about his accomplishments during the past term and goals for the final term. Talked about COVID-19 orders from the state.

17 Laura Coleman, Bay College President

The college completed the semester in-person. The college will be closed for two weeks during winter break.

Ron Miaso, Gladstone Downtown Development Authority

Held first full online meeting. Talked about problems with high water damage on the Great Lakes. They are applying for funds to repair the boardwalk in the city.

18 Patrick Jordan, Escanaba City Manager

The city council agreed to apply for a grant to work on it wastewater plant. They are going to conduct and inventory of its system. Also talked about the state orders to prevent shutoff of utilities.

Doug Leisenring, Superintendent of the Delta Schoolcraft ISD

He expects some school districts to open for a few days before the winter break to touch base with students who have been learning virtually. Other school districts are staying virtual until after the winter break. Other planned to break on the Friday before.

21 Rory Mattson, Delta Conservation District

Talked about wanting to work with landowners on applying for various state or federal programs. Deadlines are in January.

22 Jay Kulbertis, Superintendent of the Gladstone and Rapid River Schools

They decided to have students in both school districts to return to school for two days to reconnect with students following the closure of high schools.

Coby Fletcher, Escanaba School Superintendent

The Jr. and Sr. High School will return to school in January with an alternating day schedule. The goal is to limit the number of quarantines. He explained how it will work.

23 Mark Ammel, Bobaloon's

Talked about how the restaurant is dealing with the pandemic. He took advantage of the closure to do some remodeling. They are now adjusting their take-out business to include ordering from their vehicles.

Jim Kirby, Saykly's Confectionary and Gifts

Talked about how they are dealing with the number of customers in their store. Limiting to 10 people. The highway store has closed for spread of COVID and supply issues. Otherwise, he says mail orders are up for the holidays.

24 Dave Moyle, Delta County Commissioner

Talked about working with area restaurant and bar owners concerned about losing their businesses due to COVID-19 restrictions. They are attempting to find ways to restart their businesses.