



In today's Journal

Superiorland SCENE

1-6D



THE MINING Journal



Big lake outing

Rowing CLUB 3A



Tourney play

50-50 SHOT 1B

Read Renee Prusi's column 'Afternoon UP' in Superior People on page 5A in today's paper



ON GRANITE ISLAND



Medicaid enrollment hike will squeeze state budget

By DAVID EGGERT
Associated Press

LANSING — Enrollment in Michigan's expanded Medicaid program is a quarter higher today than what officials thought it would be five years from now, which will squeeze the budget when the state starts paying in 2017. Here's a look at the cost of offering health insurance coverage to more low-income adults:

BIG ENROLLMENT
Initially, Gov. Rick Snyder's administration projected 323,000 enrollees in the first year and 477,000 by 2020. But more than 15 months after the launch of "Healthy Michigan," 600,000 have signed up — 25 percent above the peak estimate in 2020. Officials expect enrollment to hover between 585,000 and 615,000 here on out. Enrollment in the traditional Medicaid program has declined, however, in an improved economy.

WHO PAYS
The U.S. government is covering the cost of expanded Medicaid for the first three years under the federal health care law. Michigan, like it already does with regular Medicaid coverage, must start contributing in 2017. It will pay 5 percent that year, phasing up to 10 percent in 2020 and each year after.

THE COST
The Snyder administration originally estimated the state would pay \$718 million for Medicaid expansion through the 2019-20 budget year, a range of \$100 million in year one to \$270 million in the fourth year. Now the estimate is \$840 million, between \$150 million the first year and \$300 million in year four.

THE IMPACT
Michigan today spends more than a quarter of the \$9.9 billion general fund — its second-largest account besides education — on Medicaid. Officials expect the ratio to hold flat in coming years despite the program's expansion. But earmarking an extra \$300 million a year for the expansion by decade's end will squeeze the budget. The Legislature is debating whether to shift more general funds to road repairs. Lawmakers could later consider cutting Medicaid provider rates. Another option is reducing optional Medicaid services, though some programs are designed to contain costs by preventing pricier stays in hospitals or nursing homes.

ANXIETY?
Snyder, a proponent of Medicaid expansion along with Democrats and some Republicans, has touted the higher-than-expected enrollment. He says offering insurance to more poor people will make them healthier and minimize their expensive trips to the emergency room, reducing hospitals' uncompensated care costs and saving money throughout the health system. It remains early to say if the law is working as intended in that respect. The state budget office continually analyzes Medicaid caseloads and is planning for the additional enrollees, spokesman Kurt Weiss said. Conservatives who opposed the expansion have warned of the price tag.

WHAT'S NEXT
The Snyder administration is seeking a federal waiver needed by year's end so the expansion can continue beyond April 2016. It would require adults enrolled in Healthy Michigan for four years to buy private insurance through a government exchange or pay more for health coverage. If the Obama administration grants the waiver, Snyder and the Republican-led Legislature would first budget expansion costs for the fiscal year starting October 2016.

Above, the Granite Island Light Station from Lake Superior is pictured. Below top, station owner Scott Holman shows his accurate copy of the lightkeeper's log from 1900-1937 in the renovated and historically-accurate light station during a tour by members of the United States Lighthouse Society. Below middle, from left, society members Frank Grabowski of Westminster, Maryland and Al Smith of Audobon Park, New Jersey, hold an old captain's telescope (from the turn of the 20th century). Below bottom, society members explore the books and antique decor during their tour of the station. (Journal photos by Mary Wardell)

TOUR SHOWS PUBLIC ACCESS CHALLENGES

By MARY WARDELL
Journal Staff Writer

MARQUETTE — Granite Island Lighthouse, about 12 miles north of Marquette's Lower Harbor on Lake Superior, opened its doors for its first ever public tour Thursday by members of the United States Lighthouse Society.

Almost 40 members traveled from all over the country for an ongoing tour of 33 lighthouses along the south shore of Lake Superior. That tour included a special invitation by owner Scott Holman, a retired steel foundry owner and Northern Michigan University trustee, to the renovated 147-year-old light station on Granite Island.

"Phenomenal, it was just absolutely wonderful," said Marge Czop of Lindenhurst, Ill., co-leader of the group's Lake Superior tour.

The U.S. Lighthouse Society is a non-profit historical and educational organization incorporated to educate, inform, and entertain those who are interested in lighthouses.

Czop said of the roughly 400 lighthouses she has visited all over the world as a member of the society, Granite Island's is the most beautiful she has ever seen.

"(Scott) has done such a magnificent job of maintaining the light for the future. It's amazing," Czop said. "Most of the other lighthouses we see are at the opposite end of the spectrum. They're not as well maintained as his."

It was a beautiful day for a lighthouse tour, but even in relatively mild conditions, the lake had its own plans for the group that day.

Only about 10 people made it to shore before the Granite Islander, Holman's aluminum Z920 Zodiac vessel with rubber sides that carried the first group to the island, was punctured by the bow of the boat carrying the next group. The six-inch gash deflated one of the four air compartments, or sponsons, that mostly function to protect the vessel, Holman said.

"We were approaching the dock ...

OWNER DETAILS SITE TRANSFORMATION

By MARY WARDELL
Journal Staff Writer

MARQUETTE — When Scott Holman purchased the Granite Island Light Station 15 years ago, it was unrecognizable from its present state.

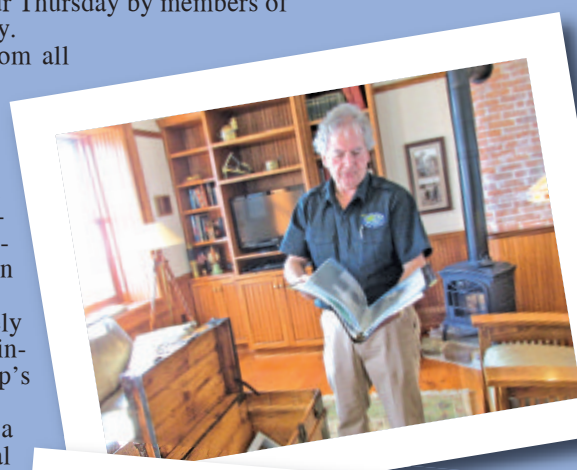
Dilapidated and rotted out from floor to roof, a person could see the sky standing in the basement, Holman said.

"The challenges of restoring it were enormous," he said. "We started in the year 2000 on May 20, and there wasn't a contractor in Marquette that would touch it. And we had them all out on the fishing boat to take a look at it on our first day on April 27. None were interested."

But eventually, Holman hired Stan Stenson, a carpenter from the village of Covington, who put together a special team for the job. After two and a half summers of staying on the island in tents for 12-hour days, four days a week, new custom-built and historically-accurate windows, doors, floors, ceilings, roof and more were replaced in the lighthouse's original style. The original wainscoting, which contained many layers of lead paint, had to be torn out and replaced as well.

"We tried to replicate what was there — aside from the TV — what was there in 1868 and the 1900s," Holman said. "I went to the national archives in Washington, D.C., and looked up a number of things, including the lightkeeper's log. So my wife and I painstakingly — and they wouldn't let you use a copy machine — set up our little camera and, page after page from 1900 to 1937 every day, took a picture of the lightkeeper's log."

After digitally enhancing the pages so they were legible, Holman and his wife, Martine (Biancardini), from Paris, France, were able to place the accurate log with each lightkeeper's orig-



See Tour p. 8A

See Change p. 8A

GOOD AFTERNOON
James Newland
Thank you for subscribing to The Mining Journal

INSIDE TODAY
Four Sections, 24 pages

Records2A
Local, Regional3A

Editorial4A
Superior People5A
Editorial4A
Superior People5A
State/Nation/World8A

Sports1-2, 6B
Classifieds3-6B
In Business1C
Community3C
Superiorland Scene1-6D

WEATHER

TUE 71 52 WED 76 54



Etcetera

Tour from 1A

which is on the southeast side of the island, with a wind that was blowing directly into the dock, and that makes it difficult to stabilize the boat for people to get on and off," Holman said. "That was responsible for why the boat that tied up next to me (ended up) ripping a hole in the side of the sponson. The wind was blowing some real heavy chop into that dock."

This left the first group temporarily stranded while a "rescue" boat was called in, though nobody was complaining as they explored the sunlit island and stunning renovated lighthouse interior.

The accident prohibited any more groups from docking, but Holman said the damage to the boat was minimal.

Czop said if anyone in the group was disappointed they didn't get to tour the island, they didn't let it show.

"As part of the lighthouse society, we frequently get into situations we have to get out of," she said.

"We've been on some boats where we've been drenched wet. ... Sometimes we miss a boat or our bus gets stuck in the sand or in the mud. Folks on the bus just make the best of it and on we go. ... They're a wonderful group."

The incident illustrates the challenges of creating reliable public access to the water-locked historic site, Holman said.

"It's a rocky cliff for one thing, and depending on which way the wind is blowing, hard, you have to have a place to park the boat," Holman explained. "Another challenge is, if you were to make plans for a public trip like this, you can't rely on the wind direction or the intensity of the waves, and so you can make all the plans you want ... and, within a few hours, be prevented from making the trip."

Holman, who bought the lighthouse for about \$80,000 in a government bid in 2000, said he has clocked winds of up to 145 mph and had two aluminum flag poles snapped in half on the island.

A lifelong diving enthusiast and long-time instructor, Holman said he still spends about one month per year diving in the Caribbean, so he knows how Superior compares to other bodies of water.

"I would rather be running that boat in 9-foot waves in the ocean than running a

boat in Lake Superior with 5-foot waves, because the chop in Lake Superior is very unique," Holman said. "It's like a washing machine, it just comes at you in all directions. ... Lake Superior has its own personality."

Michigan is home to more than 120 lighthouses, the most of any state in the U.S. Most of them are owned by nonprofit organizations that are tasked with raising money or collecting government grants to keep them open for public access.

Soon after Holman purchased the Granite Island Lighthouse, legislation was passed requiring all transfers of government-owned lighthouses to be to 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations instead of private owners.

"But it is difficult to raise enough money that way to do a serious renovation of a lighthouse," Holman said.

"I think there's something to be said for private ownership, where someone is willing to put their energy and time and money into something that they have ownership in."

Holman declined to say how much he has spent on the house's extensive renovations, but it's been "more than a few eggshells," he joked.

Holman opens the lighthouse for others' use when there is a good reason, he said. He has donated trips to the island for charitable fundraisers, like Rotary International and Lake Superior Theater, and also offers the site free of charge for use in weather research and extending NMU's 4G WIMAX Internet to rural areas.

"We are so thankful that Scott Holman allowed us to do this," Czop said. "This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to get out to Granite Island. He was very gracious to allow us to come out, and we know he put a lot of work and effort to get us out there."

Holman returned the appreciation, saying it was too bad not everyone could tour the island, but he loved the group's enthusiasm for lighthouses and maritime history, which he shares.

"I thought they were just very enthusiastic about lighthouses in general," he said. "But specifically, I think they had a good time out there, and so I was pleased with the results."

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Change from 1A

inal handwriting in the living room at the light station. The records include the history of three deaths that occurred on the island, two from storms coming or going to shore and the other from a heart attack, Holman said.

Holman became interested in the property when he found out it was for sale, based on his fascination with maritime history. He recalled taking many students on diving expeditions to the island as well as to various shipwrecks on the lake when he, as a Northern Michigan University undergraduate, owned a small diving shop in Marquette called Lake Superior Skin Diving Company.

"I've always been interested in, for most of my life, been interested in maritime history," Holman said. "So I was familiar somewhat with the island, but the history part was interesting to me. So when it became available, I just thought that would be right up my alley. ... Subsequent to that, there were opportunities to do some things with it besides the history."

To provide power to the lighthouse, which is obviously "off the grid," Holman erected solar and wind power units on the island. He also gave the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Nebraska permission to set up research equipment to help monitor and understand

water levels of the Great Lakes and how they are impacted by weather conditions.

It has provided the infrastructure for a United Nations weather station and supports the WIMAX service link from NMU to the Powell Township School District.

Granite Island Lighthouse has also hosted charitable fundraisers, a wedding, legislative visits and a high school reunion, he said.

Holman was born and raised in Ishpeming and was the first in the Upper Peninsula to have had a Scuba diving shop. He served as director of the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society at Whitefish Point for 12 years, as well as former chairman and current member of NMU's Board of Trustees, past president of the Steel Founders Society of America and regional vice chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

He is retired from making steel castings at Bay Cast, Inc. and test support systems at Bay Cast Tech in downstate Bay City, where Holman lives part of the year.

For more information on the light station's history, the restoration process — including slideshows and video — and a live virtual view of the island any time, visit its website at www.graniteisland.com.

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Cuba set to reopen embassy



In this July 15 photo, a worker removes the Cuban Interests Section sign in Washington just days prior to the building being accredited as the Cuban Embassy. Cuba's blue, red and white-starred flag is set today outside the country's diplomatic mission in the United States for the first time since the countries severed ties in 1961. (AP photo)

Man survives plane crash

PARK TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) — Authorities say a 66-year-old man walked away with only minor injuries after crash landing a small plane on a Lake Michigan beach.

Steven Stam told officers he was flying Sunday evening along the lakeshore in western Michigan when the plane's engine began having trouble. He brought the plane down in dune grass in Ottawa County's Park Township, near Holland State Park.

No one else was in the plane and no one on the ground was injured.

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