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# Geauga

## TIMES COURIER

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## Akron mayor withdraws fracking deal at LaDue

By SAMANTHA COTTRILL

Akron City Mayor Dan Horrigan last week announced the withdrawal of the oil and gas well proposal with DP Energy Auburn, LLC, at the LaDue Reservoir in Geauga County.

Mayor Horrigan said his decision came after hearing arguments from both inside and outside the City of

Akron, including Geauga County residents and organizations, opposed to leasing mineral rights of 475 acres of city-owned property at the southeast side of the LaDue Reservoir, located in Auburn and Troy townships.

"I have decided to withdraw the LaDue well and gas proposal from the Akron City Council agenda at this time," Mayor Horrigan said. "They

will not need to consider it, there will not be a vote on it, we're not moving forward, definitively, with the project."

Akron and Geauga residents responded to the proposed lease citing concerns of city drinking water and the effects horizontal drilling, known as fracking, could have on the county's groundwater. About 97 percent of Geauga residents

source their drinking water from groundwater wells.

Mayor Horrigan said the public's concerns regarding irresponsible fracking seen across the country are not lost on him, but with this decision, the city lost an opportunity for increased revenue. He noted the city

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## Walk in the woods



Photo by Michael Steinberg

The Cleveland Metroparks held a series of "Try-It" sessions to learn how to snowshoe over the snowy weekend at the South Chagrin Reservation in Bentleyville. Classes full of beginners gathered outside Look About Lodge to try out snowshoeing and learn interesting facts about this wintertime activity. Jess Robins, right, trudges through the snow with his family, carrying Emery, 8, toward the end of their snow-shoeing adventure as Lucy, 13, and wife, Britt, follow closely behind.

## Auditor calls for tax reductions to ease burden on residents

By SAMANTHA COTTRILL

In light of increased property values as a result of Geauga County's 2020 triennial update, Auditor Charles Walder is calling upon taxing authorities to reduce taxes to ease the reappraisal burden on residents affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Counties complete reappraisals every six years with a required triennial update three years later that the Ohio Department of Taxation must approve. The triennial update looks at property sales from the past three years to determine the change in value.

During the commissioners' Feb. 2 meeting, Mr. Walder said taxing authorities, like schools, libraries and municipalities, should

re-evaluate their needs this year and potentially reduce taxes temporarily. Townships, for example, have the authority to delay collections on levies if they so choose, he said.

"I'm arguing that every entity needs to self-evaluate and say, 'Do we really need to do this right now?' I sent an email out to every taxing authority [Feb. 1] and basically asked them, please look at what you're doing, and if you can postpone it for a year, do it, and give that money back to the taxpayers," he told the commissioners.

Mr. Walder said he also reached out to the Ohio Department of Taxation about potentially providing mid-year tax relief to residents. As of last week, department officials

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## County leaders reflect on many changes in Geauga during 2020

By BRIAN DOERING

Even with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, county leaders last week concluded that the state of Geauga is strong.

Representatives from education, human services as well as health and safety sectors of the community were among the numerous speakers who delivered messages during the State of Geauga Webinar on Feb. 5.

The annual report in years past was done during an in-person breakfast.

"We're almost a year into this global pandemic and wanted to spend some time hearing from individuals from different sectors on the impact that COVID-19 has had" and what changes will stick in the post-COVID world, said Kimm

Leininger, president and CEO of Geauga Growth Partnership.

On March 10, 2020, Gov. Mike DeWine informed universities including Kent State University at Geauga that they had to move to remote classes due to the coronavirus pandemic, recalled Angela Spalsbury, dean and chief administrative officer. The school moved to remote and shut down buildings a week later.

"At the time, we thought it was only going to be a few weeks, but nevertheless, we quickly began to offer all of our students sports as well," said Dr. Spalsbury. "These services are a big part of the reason that students attend the regional campus and is what we call the

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