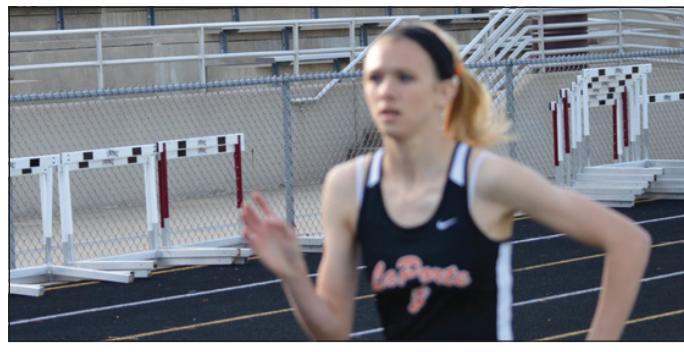


Sports

TRACK AND FIELD

Local athletes prepare for track and field state meet

FOR MORE, SEE PAGE B1



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Thursday, June 5, 2014

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\$1

THE LA PORTE COUNTY HERALD-ARGUS

Bringing new ideas to the table

Students propose business ideas for vacant storefronts

By MATT FRITZ
Staff writer
1-219-326-3887
mfritz@heraldargus.com

LA PORTE — When a group of Kesling Middle School honors students entered their regular reading class on Tuesday, they found a special audience waiting for them.

It wasn't fellow students or school officials, rather it was the city's mayor and a group of economic development and business leaders.

Their purpose: To listen to the student's proposals for new businesses in vacant storefronts in downtown La Porte.

It was all part of a project-based learning activity from 8th grade teacher Justin Holmquist.

"I thought revamping the downtown was really relevant to La Porte," he said. "I wanted to try it with these students because I knew their work ethic and drive and thought it would be the perfect opportunity for them to try something like this."

And the students brought a variety of ideas to the table.

One involved a health food business to better accommodate healthy lifestyles in La Porte.

"Everywhere you look in La Porte, there are overweight people," said student Taylor Woods during her



Photos by Matt Fritz
ABOVE: Mike Seitz, president of the Greater La Porte Chamber of Commerce, speaks with Kesling Middle School students Ashley Boyan, Deseray Solmos, Emily Lipsett and Autumn Woodard during their presentation for a proposed candy store business in downtown La Porte.

RIGHT: Ben Konowitz of La Porte Seamless Gutter provides advice to Kesling Middle School students proposing new businesses for downtown La Porte.

group's presentation. She pointed out that 66 percent of Americans are overweight, and 2.8 million of them die a year due to obesity. She said people are in a rush throughout the day as they handle duties with work and family,

and unhealthy fast foods are just the easiest meals to get for them.

Her group's answer: Split — an organic fruit and health shake bar offering all-natural



See IDEAS, Page A3

'Despicable Me 2' offered in downtown La Porte

Friday Night at the Movies returns to downtown La Porte this week with "Despicable Me 2."

All are invited to bring their blankets and lawn chairs to the free showing of the movie at dusk Friday in the Herald-Argus parking lot at the corner of State and Monroe streets.

The season of movies kicks-off with free popcorn provided by the La Porte Savings Bank and food, ice cream, and refreshments for purchase by B & J's American Café and Temple News Agency. Bump n' Jump Playhouses will also have bounce houses for children starting at 6 p.m. until the time of the movie.

A limited quantity of T-shirts featuring minions, the characters from the hit movie, will be for sale in both youth and adult sizes.

The youth shirts cost \$8 and the adult shirts are \$10.

All proceeds will be added to the fund for a new outdoor movie screen for the downtown Friday Night at the Movies. All T-shirts will be for sale starting today at the Greater La Porte Chamber of Commerce, which is located at 803 Washington St. in the old train depot. The shirts will also be available Friday night at the screening of "Despicable Me 2."

The 2014 season of Downtown La Porte Friday Night at the Movies was made possible by contributions from Nipsco, Anytime Fitness, Sauers Buick GMC, Kabelin Ace Hardware, Suds on State, General Insurance Services, Inc., and The La Porte County Herald-Argus.

For more information, call La Porte Downtown Director Thaddeus Cutler at (219) 362-3178 or email cutler@lpchamber.com.

— From staff reports

Additional funds requested for EMS base

By GABRIELLE GONZALEZ
Staff writer
(219) 326-3870
ggonzalez@heraldargus.com

LA PORTE — An additional \$100,000 will be needed to complete the new La Porte County EMS base.

The new site has been designed to be across from the IU Health La Porte Hospital, stationed on the corner of State Street and Tyler Street in La Porte. The site will include five small bedrooms for the EMS staff who will stay at the base for their 24 hour shifts, enough garage space to house the four ambulance vehicles year round and the housing amenities that were in the old base such as a kitchen, living space, bathrooms and equipment areas.

The site's original estimate and appropriation of \$886,642 to build the new EMS base was considerably low after the engineers and architects of the project closely examined necessary requirements and stipulations.

Architect Robert Gerometta of Gerometta & Kinzel Architects, Inc. made a request approved by the La Porte County Commissioner's to approach the La Porte County Council for an additional \$100,000 to complete the project. The appropriation is optioned to come from the county's riverboat, win tax or CCD fund.

Gerometta said the additional \$100,000 will cover

all the related costs of the project, including the work and the purchase of any necessary equipment.

He said the project will go out for public bid and the county needs to be able to budget funds to meet bid prospects. He said once the project is bid and the actual project cost is established, unspent funds will revert to the county's general fund.

"Pat Pease made a good faith estimate for the site," said La Porte County Attorney Shaw Friedman.

He said as the architects and engineers looked further into requirements needed such as storm water conveyances to meet La Porte City requirements, the former EMS director's estimate was under the necessary budgeting funds to implement the project.

He said the county was facing an immediate deadline last February to appropriate funds in order to receive funding from the hospital. The La Porte hospital has committed to donate \$485,000 and a small parcel of land to the project.

The new preliminary budget includes an estimate of the new building of \$725,000 to \$765,000 and \$25,000 for an emergency generator. The Reith-Riley estimate for the site's paving, walks and curbs is \$50,000 as well as a landscaping allowance of \$5,000. A house on the

See FUNDS, Page A4



Photo by Matt Fritz
La Porte County officials stand with Dave Wolfe (front row, second from right) and IDEM's Partners for Clean Air Coordinator Letty Zepeda (second from left), on Wednesday. Both the county and Wolfe won awards from Zepeda's organization.

County receives clean air awards

By MATT FRITZ
Staff writer
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mfritz@heraldargus.com

LA PORTE — For avid cyclist Dave Wolfe, the best part about riding his bike everywhere he goes isn't the exercise he gets or the related health benefits.

It's the time out in nature.

The 71-year-old La Porte resident, who logged 11,000 miles on his bike in 2013 alone, said he remembers once catching the sight of a mother duck teaching her babies how to swim in

the lakes of La Porte.

"People probably didn't realize it," he said, "but when those little ducks are first born and they get into the water, they don't know how to swim. They have to learn to paddle their feet first. And when you see something like that, it's kind of astonishing."

And Wolfe was astonished again when he learned he was among two recipients in La Porte County to win the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's Partners for Clean Air awards. Wolfe

took home the program's first ever bike award, while the county itself took home the municipal award. Both awards were for efforts by individuals and organizations to improve air quality in the community.

Wolfe said he was happy about the award because it showed that the organization thought not only of clean air, but also of recreation, health and exercise.

"You know it's great to have clean air," he said, "but if you don't do the

See AWARDS, Page A3



FRIDAY WEATHER
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Thursday, June 5, 2014

Today in History

1914 Mr. and Mrs. Frances A. Wiltfong appeared in court with a flaxen haired baby which they are adopting. Its mother and father had deserted their offspring.

1964 Three-hundred and thirty-five La Porte High school graduates received diplomas at Kiwanis Field at the 95th annual ceremony of the high school here.

1989 Nathaniel Clay is the new schools superintendent in Michigan City.

2004 More people are using motorcycles, a gas-busing option.

— Courtesy of the La Porte County Public Library, UFS Features

Lottery

INDIANA

Daily 3-Midday: 2-7-9

Daily 3: 5-0-9

Daily 4-Midday: 3-3-6-8

Daily 4: 6-4-2-7

Cash 5: 6-14-17-19-29

Quick Draw Midday: 1-3-5-8-16-19-21-22-26-30-40-44-46-49-59-62-63-66-68-76

Quick Draw: 1-5-13-14-21-22-27-34-37-42-43-45-48-55-59-66-71-76-77-88

Poker Lotto: 3S-8S-AD-5C-10S

Hoosier Lotto: 5-10-13-14-22-27

Hoosier Lotto jackpot:

\$1 million

Mega Millions jackpot:

\$45 million

Powerball: 1-7-10-22-49 PB:24 PP:3

Powerball jackpot:

\$192 million

MICHIGAN

Poker Lotto: QD-5C-8C-8H-6S

Midday Daily 3: 0-5-0

Midday Daily 4: 7-8-7-9

Daily 3: 6-2-3

Daily 4: 3-1-0-3

Fantasy 5: 09-15-21-27-29

Classic Lotto 47: 12-19-39-43-44-45

Keno: 01-04-08-10-11-13-15-19-23-24-25-27-41-42-51-59-61-69-71-77-78-79

ILLINOIS

Lucky Day Lotto Midday: 11-16-22-24-39

Lucky Day Lotto Evening: 03-07-12-24-27

Hit or Miss Morning: 03-05-06-11-13-15-16-17-19-21-23-24, FB: 2

Hit or Miss Midday: 01-02-03-05-11-12-14-16-18-19-21-22, FB: 1

Hit or Miss Drive: 01-02-03-05-06-07-08-15-17-20-21-23, FB: 2

Hit or Miss Evening: 04-05-06-10-13-14-16-17-19-20-21-23, FB: 2

Pick 3 Midday: 4-6-5, FB: 4

Pick 3 Evening: 8-0-5, FB: 4

Pick 4 Midday: 8-1-3-5, FB: 4

Pick 4 Evening: 5-1-3-0, FB: 7

My 3 Midday: 2-2-6

My 3 Evening: 5-0-2

Contacts

Correction policy: The Herald-Argus strives toward accuracy in all its stories and information. If you believe an error has been published, contact News Editor Kimberly King at (219) 326-3858 or kkking@heraldargus.com.

Contact the H-A: Phone — (219) 362-2161 or (219) 926-3559 (Michigan City); Email — circulation@heraldargus.com, display@heraldargus.com, newsroom@heraldargus.com, classified@heraldargus.com, business@heraldargus.com, Mail — 701 State St., La Porte, IN 46350; Fax: (219) 362-2166.

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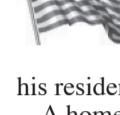
La Porte County Historical Society
Michigan City High School 1887 to 1925 can be seen in this picture taken in 1911.



Obituaries

The Rev. Bill Julius Ashley

April 28, 1925 – May 30, 2014



The Rev. Bill Julius Ashley was called home on May 30, 2014, at his residence.



ASHLEY

A home going celebration will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 7, 2014, at Redeemed Fellowship Church, 7922 W. Pahs Road, Michigan City, with Pastor David Ashley officiating. Burial will follow at Swan Lake Memorial Gardens with military honors. Visitation will be 9 a.m. Saturday at the church until the time of service.

Bill Julius Ashley was born on April 28, 1925, to the late Cleveland and Rosie (Johnson) Ashley in Dubach, Louisiana. He came from a large family, having 19 brothers and sisters. He attended Hopewell School and served in the U.S. Navy from 1943-1946. He was a First Class Seaman and fought in WWII. He was aboard two

ships, the USS Rocham Beau and the USS Ganymede.

Bill accepted Jesus Christ at an early age. He relocated to Michigan City in the early 1950s. He united in holy matrimony to Clara Collins in 1970. They shared 44 years together on this side of glory. They share 12 children in this union.

Bill was pastor of Rock of Ages and later founded Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in 1975, where he served as senior pastor for 29 years. He was an active member in the community and was politically inclined. He was often called upon to serve or offer guidance for Michigan City former Mayors Arnold, Brillson and Oberlie.

Bill served the community in many different capacities: From 1975-1999, he served in radio ministry at WIMS on the Get Acquainted Program; from 1980-2002, he was president of the Northwest Indiana Ministers Conference; from 1990-1999, he served as a Michigan City Police Department chap-

lain; he was treasurer for the Chaplains from 1999-2003; he was the chaplain at Saint Anthony Memorial Hospital in the mid 2000s; he served as a board member for the Homeless Shelter and the Martin Luther King Jr. steering committee; he was a member of the NAACP; and was called upon to help keep order at the Michigan City Area Schools when youth were going in the wrong direction.

Some of Bill's hobbies include being a mechanic by trade. He could work on any vehicle and fix it. He loved to take his boat out on the lake to fish. He was easy to get along with and known to be friendly, fair, loving and caring.

Bill leaves to cherish behind his beautiful and devoted wife Clara Ashley; his children Jerry (Rene) Ashley, Pastor David (Jillian) Ashley, Bruce Ashley, Yolanda Ashley, Rosie (Pastor Ernest) Jones and Kenneth Ashley, all of Michigan City, Min.

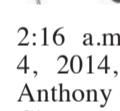
Roger Ashley of Denver, Colorado, Larry (Evone) Ashley of Racine, Wisconsin, Tonya D-

vis of Griffith, Indiana, Phyllis (Dave) Wells of Mishawaka, Indiana, and Sharon (Keevey) Davis of St. Louis, Missouri; his sisters Verlee (Rev. Joseph) Blackshere and Tressia Ashle, both of Pontiac, Michigan, Maggie Holland of Oakland, California, Florene (Robert) Henderson of Michigan City and Shirley Ashley of Brandon, Mississippi; 41 grandchildren; 73 great-grandchildren; 13 great-great grandchildren; his God-children Toshia Fleming, Pastor Charles M. Jones Jr., Charlene Jones-Clark, Freddie Jones, William Jones and Joleena Phillips; his adopted grandsons D'Shawn Martin, Julian Smith and Raymond Spencer; and a host of nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

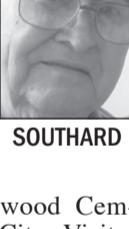
He was preceded in death by his parents Cleveland and Rosie Ashley; son Billy Ashley; brothers Levi, Pervis, Robert and Theodis Ashley; and sisters Ruth Dunlap and Cleo Dyer. To sign the guestbook, please visit Coleman & Hicks Funeral Home and Crematory www.colemanhicks.com.

Jerome Gabrysak Sr.

April 26, 1932 – June 3, 2014



John Southard
March 14, 1934 – June 4, 2014



SOUTHARD

John W. Southard, 80, of La Porte, Indiana, passed away at 2:16 a.m. Wednesday, June 4, 2014, at Franciscan St. Anthony Health - Michigan City.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Friday, June 6, 2014, at Ott/Haverstock Funeral Chapel, 418 Washington St., Michigan City, Indiana. Burial will follow in Greenwood Cemetery, Michigan City. Visitation will be from 11 a.m. until the time of service Friday at the Ott/Haverstock Funeral Chapel.

He was born March 14, 1934, in Tulot, Arkansas, to the late Alfred Southard and Jewel (McPherson) Southard Clark. On April 17, 1954, in

Arkansas, he married Carolyn "Sue" Collins, who survives in La Porte. Also surviving are daughter Sherry (Tim) Miller of Michigan City; granddaughter Melissa Miller of Chicago; and brother Terry (Annamarie) Clark of Michigan City. He was preceded in death by a son Steven Southard; two sisters Janette Bundy and Betty Rawls; and a brother Robert Southard.

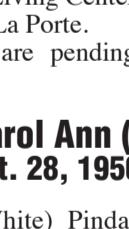
John retired after more than 40 years with Weil-McLain, Michigan City. He was a true outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting, fishing and gardening.

In memory of John's family members and friends who have suffered from cancer, memorials may be given to the American Cancer Society, 130 Red Coach Dr., Mishawaka, IN 46545.

To sign a guestbook and leave condolences online, visit our Web site at www.otthaverstock.com.

Rosemary Elizabeth Miller

August 6, 1930 – June 3, 2014



PINDA

Mrs. Rosemary Elizabeth Miller, 83, of La Porte, Indiana, died Tuesday, June 3, 2014, at Golden Living Center Fountainview in La Porte.

Arrangements are pending

with Haverstock Funeral Home and Cremations Services and will be announced later.

Further details may be found at www.haverstockfuneralhome.com.

Visitation will be from 4 to

7 p.m. Thursday, June 5, at

Essling Funeral Home, 1117

Indiana Ave., La Porte. Rosary

will be recited at 6:30 p.m.

OBITUARIES**David E. Thomas**
August 13, 1935 – May 22, 2014

Mr. David E. Thomas, 78, of La Porte passed away at 10:56 a.m. Thursday, May 22, 2014, at his home after a five-month illness.

He was born August 13, 1935, in La Porte to Joseph and Janice (Galbreth) Thomas and lived in the La Porte area his entire life.

David retired as a expeditor at Bethlehem Steel.

On August 6, 1960, in Hagerstown, Maryland, he married Suzanne (Healy) Thomas, who survives.

He was a member of St. Paul Episcopal Church, and a veteran of the U.S. Army Reserves.

He is survived by his wife Suzanne of La Porte; one son Mark (Lhou) Thomas of Hollister, California; one daughter Jennifer (Bryan) Schuiteman of Valparaiso, Indiana; four grandchildren Courtney, Matthew, Collin and Mackenzie; two sisters Marcia Felton of Granger, Indiana, and Jane Brost of California.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one brother Joseph Thomas.

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 7, 2014, at Essling Funeral Home with Father Thomas Kincade officiating.

Essling Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial contributions may be made to VNA Hospice, 901 S. Woodland Ave., Michigan City, IN 46360.

Family and friends may leave their condolences at www.esslingfuneralhome.com.

POLICE CALLS

The following were reported by the La Porte Police Department and the La Porte County Sheriff's Department:

May 25

■ At approximately 6:55 p.m., La Porte Police responded to Country Acres Apartments, Building 3, to investigate a domestic assault.

On arrival, police were advised by witnesses that the suspect had run out of building 3 and into building 8. The suspect Johnnie J. Carter Jr., 20, of La Porte was located in the utility room of the building and immediately told police he didn't do anything to the woman. He then stated that the couple was playing around and wrestling when things got out of control. He did not elaborate further.

The victim, who was transported to IU Health La Porte Hospital by EMS, told police she and Carter had ended their relationship that evening and the two began arguing.

The victim said while she was sitting on the floor, Carter grabbed her head and banged it against the bedroom wall several times. He then picked her up, threw

her on the bed and began strangling her. The victim said she was able to get out of the apartment and get help. Police observed injuries to her head and neck.

Carter was arrested on charges of strangulation, a Class D felony, and domestic battery, a Class A misdemeanor.

■ At approximately 9:54 p.m., La Porte Police officers observed Jesus Temores-Casillas (alias: Antonio Zuniga), 32, of La Porte pull into an alleyway in the 700 block of Lincoln Way. They knew him to be wanted on warrant for the charges of domestic battery and interfering with the reporting of a crime, both Class A misdemeanors.

Upon taking Temores-Casillas into custody on the warrant, \$2,831 in cash was located on him, along with a small bag of white substance. Temores-Casillas readily admitted to police the substance was cocaine, but stated the money was from collecting rent for the owner of King Gyros restaurant. The substance field tested positive for cocaine. Temores-Casillas was additionally charged with possession of cocaine, a Class D felony.

May 26

■ At about 7:08 p.m. La Porte Police responded to Lady Rose Bar, 403 E. Lincoln Way, to investigate a domestic in which a truck was damaged.

The victim told police that she and Jeffrey D. Kirkland, 49, of New Carlisle had gotten into an argument, which resulted in him punching the windshield of her 1998 Ford

truck several times causing it to crack. Police observed the damage to the passenger side of the glass.

Kirkland allegedly admitted to the damage. He was also found to be wanted on warrant for operating while intoxicated, a Class C misdemeanor, and was taken into custody. A review of charges for mischief has been forwarded to the La Porte County Prosecutor's Office.

May 27

■ Joseph M. Farlie, 23, of La Porte was charged with battery, a Class B misdemeanor.

May 28

■ At about 7:11 a.m., La Porte Police responded to the 400 block of 2nd Street to investigate a domestic disturbance in which the male suspect was threatening to punch the victim in the face and fight officers when they arrived.

As police arrived in the area, they observed the suspect, Timothy R. Lisak, 25, of La Porte running from the residence southwest toward F Street. He was located near 4th and F streets where he was seen throwing a small plastic baggie into a nearby yard.

Police spoke with the victim, who advised Lisak is her boyfriend and the couple argued that morning, which resulted in him throwing a glass of water at her and making threats to batter her and take on police.

Lisak was taken into custody for possession of a schedule II controlled substance (acetaminophen/ hydrocodone), a Class D felony, and resisting law enforcement, a Class A misdemeanor.

■ Ronnie J. Gentry Jr., 35, of La Porte was charged with theft, a Class D felony (failure to appear).

■ Dusty J. Young, 24, of LaCrosse was charged with fraud and theft, both Class D felonies.

■ Joseph M. Farlie, 23, of La Porte was charged with possession of marijuana, a Class A misdemeanor (revocation of suspended sentence).

■ At 8:40 p.m., La Porte Police stopped a black Toyota operated by Matthew A. Martinez, 27, of La Porte for texting while driving. In checking Martinez's license status, it was verified that his driving privileges were suspended. He was issued a summons to appear in court on the charge of driving while suspended, a Class A misdemeanor. He was also cited for texting while driving.

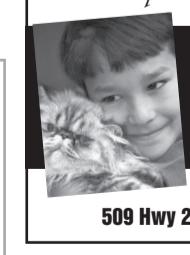
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Indiana picks 18 counties as preschool finalists

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Twelve urban and six rural counties selected as finalists for an Indiana preschool pilot program have until the end of the month to make their cases, the state announced Wednesday.

The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration said the counties are: Allen (home to Fort Wayne), Bartholomew (Columbus), Delaware (Muncie), Elkhart (Elkhart), Grant (Marion),

Howard (Kokomo), Jackson (Seymour), Kosciusko (Warsaw), Lake (Gary), Lawrence (Bedford), Madison (Anderson), Marion (Indianapolis), Noble (Kendallville), St. Joseph (South Bend), Tippecanoe (Lafayette), Vanderburgh (Evansville), Vigo (Terre Haute) and Wayne (Richmond).

The pilot program created by the General Assembly this year provides preschool funding for low-income 4-year-olds

in five counties. Families earning up to 127 percent of the federal poverty level — a little less than \$30,000 for a family of four — would qualify.

To narrow the field to the five pilot counties, FSSA said counties have until June 30 to submit statements on their ability to help meet a financial match, participation of current and new providers, community and family engagement, and their readiness to launch the program in January.

The \$10 million pilot program, a scaled-down version of one of Gov. Mike Pence's top legislative priorities, is being funded from FSSA's budget and is seeking up to \$5 million in private funds to expand the program to additional students.

The program will be delivered by public and private schools and certain child care centers, FSSA said. The agency said it is still working out the structure of the program.

AWARDS
From Page A1

exercise and you don't have good health, what good is clean air going to do you?"

According to information provided by the organization, Wolfe won because of his overwhelming dedication to the environment. He logged a total of 79,000 miles since he bought his JC Higgins bike from the Sears and Roebuck Company back in 1976, has been the president of the Maple City Bicycle Club for almost 20 years, helped organize club rides and the annual Orchard Country Bicycle Tour and assisted in the bike riding component of the La Porte mayor's Fitness Friday event.

“The one thing I really need to point out to people,” he said, “is, when you ride a bicycle, you get to see nature at its best.”

For Wolfe, that included seeing deer fawns up close, and just slowly taking in the great vistas of the outdoors.

According to IDEM, the La Porte County government won its municipal award by replacing 12,000 fluorescent tubes, 58 windows and 3,000 mechanical ballasts with more energy-efficient models. The county also introduced pervious concrete sidewalks to decrease water runoff, installed bike racks and purchased 12 energy efficient sheriff's de-

partment cars, among other improvements.

County planner Mitch Bishop said the county has been shooting for sustainable projects for years in an effort to decrease financial and environmental burdens on future generations, and to also make the county more attractive to businesses.

“No developer wants to come to the community that has a poor drinking water and poor air quality,” he said, “so it's a big thing when you're talking solely on economic development.”

And tourism was also a deciding factor.

County commissioner Dave Decker said people don't always take into consideration all the hundreds of millions of dollars recreational activities bring into La Porte County, especially with activities like the boat races and the many running and cycling events.

“So air quality is important,” he said. “If you're going to have runners and stuff, you don't want to have polluted air, or no one will come. So it does help tourism in La Porte County.”

Commissioner Dr. Vidya Kora also noted that childhood asthma has been a problem in La Porte, and improving air quality helps decrease those numbers.

After applauding La Porte County Health Department Director Tony Mancuso and environment

health/food specialist Patty Nocek for nominating the

county, La Porte County Commissioner Willie Millsap said the commissioners just want to help the public. “We are very concerned with public safety for our La Porte County residents,” he said, “and this is an example of what we've done and what we plan on doing in the future. Economic development is, of course, one of our top priorities, and as a county, now that we are in attainment status, companies looking for a home will be better off looking at our community.” Follow Matt Fritz on Twitter @matt_fritzHA.

done and what we plan on doing in the future. Economic development is, of course, one of our top priorities, and as a county, now that we are in attainment status, companies looking for a home will be better off looking at our community.” Follow Matt Fritz on Twitter @matt_fritzHA.

Milo said she was intrigued by the students' ideas, especially one that involved a business for planning birthday parties.

“I hope these students were able to get some valuable insights from people who do this for a living,” she said. “We definitely need more entrepreneurs and we should encourage them, if they are so inclined to own a business, to think about these kinds of things ahead of time.”

Holmquest said the mayor's involvement came about when he contacted her about about getting a list of vacant storefronts. She wound up putting together this team as well.

He said he was pleased with his students' performance.

“They did a very good job,” he said. “I was impressed.” Follow Matt Fritz on Twitter @matt_fritzHA.

During their critique, audience members cautioned them against offering a free band space, saying it would be costly to maintain, and asked them to think twice about carrying rare records or CDs, because they might not sell and just be unnecessary stock.

Another proposal was the store Sweet Cents, a retro

candy shop offering hand-made taffy and hard candy by the pound. Students said it would hearken back to days when candy stores were on every corner, and would tap into the memories of parents and grandparents, who used to frequent those stores. And they said public interest was already strong. They said they used social media campaign to garner public interest, and actually had people contacting them about visiting their nonexistent store.

There were a total of nine groups to give proposals that day.

Mike Seitz, Greater La Porte Chamber of Commerce president, said he was happy with the student's efforts.

“They all seemed to be very enthusiastic,” he said, “and took their projects very seriously and it was a really neat thing to see.”

La Porte Mayor Blair

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EPA official: Carbon rules built on methods in use

By RICK CALLAHAN
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — A top official from the Environmental Protection Agency told utility regulators from 14 states Wednesday that its new plan to target global warming by cutting power plants' carbon dioxide emissions is based on methods already in place across the nation, and not on untested technologies or ideas.

The agency's strategy is built around four existing approaches, including energy-efficiency programs and adoption of renewable energy such as wind or solar power, that states can use to come into compliance with the new carbon-cutting standard, said Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator for the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation.

"This rule is absolutely built on the things that states, cities and utilities are already doing. This is not seeking to identify innovative, yet-to-be implemented or deployed types of technologies," she told members of the Mid-America Regulatory Conference.

McCabe told the group of utility and energy regulatory agencies from 14 states from Texas to Minnesota that all states will have the flexibility to tailor their carbon-reduction plans based on their strengths and move forward either solo or by joining with other states.

The new standard seeks to implement a 30 percent cut in U.S. carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2030 from 2005 levels. States have until June 2016 to submit plans for meeting their specific carbon reductions.

Michigan, which would be required to reduce its carbon output by 31.5 percent under the plan, might want to consider joining with other states for a regional approach to meeting the rule, said Greg White, a commissioner with the Michigan Public Service Commission.

But White said he's concerned Michigan might not be able to meet the June 2016 deadline if it opted to join other states in seeking what could hold a lower-cost

option of compliance.

"That would require significant negotiations and they're not going to get done in a year, so we're very concerned about having enough time to meet that deadline," he said.

The EPA's plan, however, gives states the ability to seek a one-year deadline extension, while states that join with other states to draft multi-state plans can request a 2-year extension.

Doug Scott, chairman of the Illinois Commerce Commission, said the new EPA rules are very complex, running more than 600 pages, and it will take states, regulators and utilities time to digest them and figure out a compliance approach.

"It's very complicated. It's a whole other language," he said.

McCabe said the EPA's new draft rule doesn't just aim to curtail emissions of carbon dioxide — a greenhouse gas blamed for contributing to global warming — but would also significantly improve public health by reducing emissions of sulfur dioxide, particulate matter and nitrogen oxide by hundreds of thousands of tons.

"This will bring immediate and local and regional health benefits to everybody in the country. That's a very important benefit we shouldn't lose sight of," she said.

McCabe said that if states fail to comply with the carbon reduction, the EPA has authority under the Clean Air Act to "come forward and do it for the state."

Under the plan, Indiana would have to curb its carbon emissions by 20 percent. Gov. Mike Pence has vowed to oppose the regulations, saying they would cost the state jobs and business growth and result in higher electricity rates. Pence spokeswoman Christy Denault said Wednesday the governor is considering a range of possible approaches to fighting the rule, including a possible lawsuit.

"We'll pursue all possible methods of pushing back against this and that may possibly include legal action, but we're looking at all our options," she said.

Ex-Hammond megachurch pastor seeks lower sentence

HAMMOND (AP) — The former pastor of a northwestern Indiana megachurch is asking a judge to reduce his 12-year sentence for having sex with a teenage congregant because he claims the girl was sexually experienced and aggressive.

An attorney for Jack Schaap filed a memorandum this week in U.S. District Court in Hammond asking to present new evidence about the girl's "prior extensive sexual experience" and her use of alcohol and marijuana, The (Munster) Times reported Wednesday.

Schaap, now 55, was pastor of the 15,000-member First Baptist Church of Hammond for 11 years when he was fired in July 2012. He pleaded guilty last year to transporting the girl to Illinois and Michigan for sexual encounters over a four-week period starting the week before the girl turned 17. He also had sex with her in his church office.

Schaap is being held in the

Federal Correctional Institute in Ashland, Kentucky, and isn't eligible for release until April 20, 2023.

"Just as a juvenile should not be sentenced as an adult, due at least in part to a lack of ability to control impulses, so should (Schaap) have received a lesser sentence ... due to the aggressiveness" of the girl, attorney Charles Murray wrote in the memorandum.

A spokesman for Schaap's former church wasn't sympathetic to the former pastor's arguments.

"We stand with the court on the judgment," said Ed Lapina, First Baptist's administrative pastor. "We felt the court was very fair and just in its judgment."

Lapina said the girl Schaap had sex with was troubled and had a "tough past."

"She came here for help and that should have been our goal," he said. "It should have been (Schaap's) goal. That didn't end up happening."

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Ritz: New ISTEP test coming sooner at U.S. request

By TOM LoBIANCO
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana must establish a new ISTEP test a year earlier than planned if state officials want to maintain their waiver from the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Democratic Schools Superintendent Glenda Ritz told members of the State Board of Education on Wednesday that federal officials made the request in a call with state officials. The new test is required

because of the state's formal exit from national Common Core standards.

The announcement that the state would have to expedite the creation of a new test caught many board members by surprise.

"Is everyone in agreement the waiver is worth it?" asked Andrea Neal, a Republican board member.

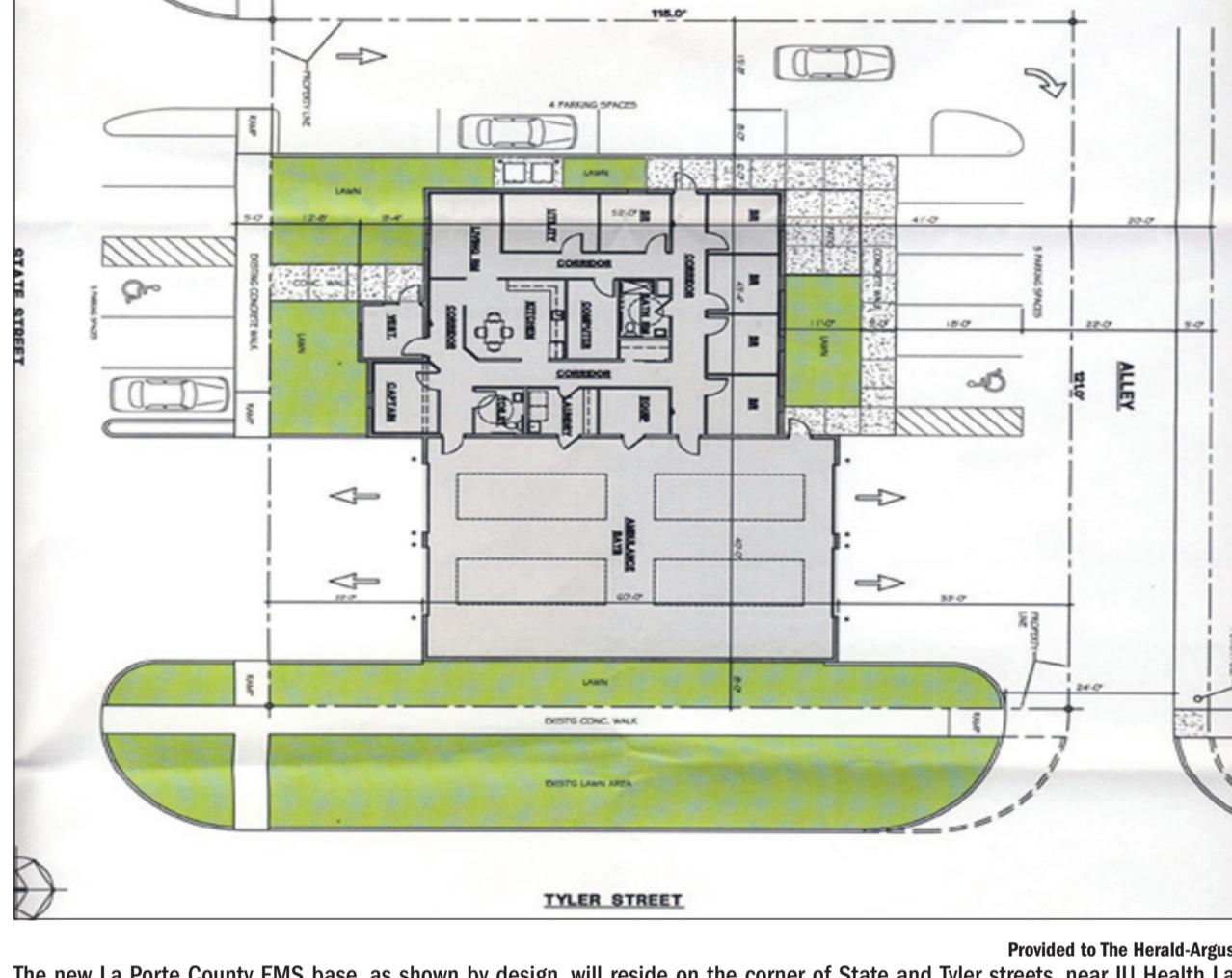
Ritz said the waiver is worth the effort because of the federal money that is at stake. If the state loses its waiver, it would lose control over millions in

"Title I" federal education dollars.

The U.S. Department of Education alerted state officials last month that their waiver was at risk because of problems monitoring low-performing schools. They also announced concerns with how the state was evaluating performance by teachers and principals.

The alert that the state was being placed on watch by the U.S. Department of Education came shortly after Indiana became the first state to withdraw from national Common Core education standards. The national test the state had been set to use was aligned with the Common Core, but federal officials said the state must have a new test ready by next year.

Ritz looked to assuage board concerns that the state may lose its waiver during a presentation at Wednesday's meeting. Her staff said state officials had been exchanging drafts of proposed changes to the waiver with federal officials. The state must submit a final proposal by June 30.



The new La Porte County EMS base, as shown by design, will reside on the corner of State and Tyler streets, near IU Health La Porte Hospital in La Porte.

FUNDS From Page A1

proposed property also needs to be removed and the Pavey estimate for the house demolition is at \$8,900.

Additional items include soils testing, estimated at \$2,500, architect and engineering fees of \$60,000 and

contingency at \$30,000.

In a letter made by John Hendricks of Charles Hendricks & Associates sent to Gerometta, the proposed site's storm water calculations for an underground facility to meet the La Porte City requirements would be about \$20,000, plus

conveyances to collect the storm water from the site at \$10,000 to \$15,000.

The EMS crew will also

be in need to employ four more persons to their staff. For more information visit the La Porte County website at www.laportecounty.org/employment.

In other news:

■ The commissioners approved a resolution in support of Senator Joe Donnelly's efforts to reduce military suicide.

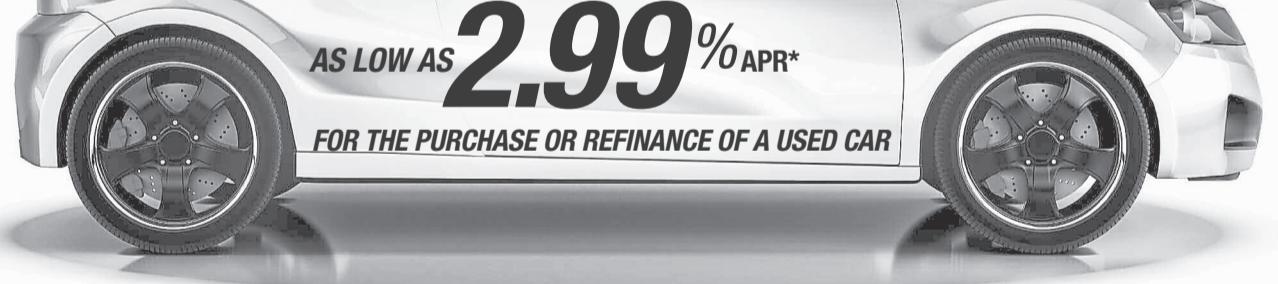
■ The county's property and liability insurance

renewal contract was approved.

■ County Assessor Mike Schultz was approved to process audits of personal property tax claims.

■ The Wanatah American Legion and La Porte County Fair received tourism funds of \$250 each.

■ Road closures were approved for the TDL Marathon Run and for the YMCA.



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Western couple held in Afghanistan

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The family of a pregnant American woman who went missing in Afghanistan in late 2012 with her Canadian husband received two videos last year in which the couple asked the U.S. government to help free them and their child from Taliban captors. The Associated Press has learned.

The videos offer the first and only clues about what happened to Caitlan Coleman and Joshua Boyle after they lost touch with their families 20 months ago while traveling in a mountainous region near the capital, Kabul. U.S. law enforcement officials investigating the couple's disappearance consider the videos authentic but say they hold limited investigative value since it's not clear when or where they were made.

The video files, which were provided to the AP, were emailed to Coleman's father last July and September by an Afghan man who identified himself as having ties to the Taliban but who has been out of contact for several months.

In one, a subdued Coleman — dressed in a conservative black garment that covers all but her face — appeals to "my president, Barack Obama" for help.

"I would ask that my family and my government do everything that they can to bring my husband, child and I to safety and freedom," the 28-year-old says in the other recording, talking into a wobbly camera while seated beside her husband, whose beard is long and untrimmed.

Though Coleman mentions a child, no baby is shown in the videos. The families say they have no information about the name or gender of the child, who would be about 18 months old.

The families decided to make the videos public now, in light of the publicity surrounding the weekend rescue of Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was freed from Taliban custody in exchange for the release of five high-level Taliban suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The families say they are disappointed that their children and grandchild were not freed as part of the same deal but are appealing for help from anyone who can give it, including the couple's captors or the government.

"It would be no more appropriate to have our government turn their backs on their citizens than to turn their backs on those who serve," Patrick Boyle, a Canadian judge and the father of Joshua Boyle, said in a telephone interview.

State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf declined Wednesday to discuss specifics of the case because of privacy considerations.

Republicans in Congress have criticized the Bergdahl agreement and complained about not being consulted, though Obama has defended it, citing a "sacred" obligation to not leave men and women in uniform behind. Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., asked Obama in a letter this week why other Americans still in the custody of Afghan militants were not included in the negotiation. The families say their children, though without political or military ties to the government, are prisoners just as Bergdahl was and should be recognized as "innocent tourists" and not penalized further for venturing into dangerous territory.

"It's an event that just stands out. I think it cries to out to the world, 'This can't be. These people must be let go immediately,'" said James Coleman, Coleman's father.

Relatives describe the couple, who met online as teenagers and wed in 2011, as well-intentioned but naive adventure seekers.

They once spent months traveling through Latin America, where they lived among indigenous Guatemalans and where Boyle grew a long beard that led some

children to call him "Santa Claus." The couple set off again in the summer of 2012 for a journey that took them to Russia, the central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and then to Afghanistan.

"They really and truly believed that if people were loved and treated with respect that that would be given back to them in kind," said Linda Boyle, Boyle's mother. "So as odd it as it may seem to us that they were there, they truly believed with all their heart that if they treated people properly, they would be treated properly."

With plans to return home in December ahead of Coleman's due date, they checked in regularly via email during their travels — expressing in their writings an awareness of the perils they faced.

The communication abruptly ended on Oct. 8, 2012, after Boyle emailed from what he called an unsafe part of Afghanistan. The last withdrawals from the couple's account were made Oct. 8 and 9 in Kabul. An Afghan official later told the AP that the two had been abducted in Wardak Province, a rugged, mountainous Taliban haven.

New hope emerged last year when an Afghan man who said he had Taliban connections contacted James Coleman, offering first audio recordings and, later, the two email video files. Though the man said the recordings had been provided by the Taliban, he did not reveal what, if anything, the captors wanted and has not been in touch with the Colemans for months.

Meanwhile, the Boyles and Colemans regularly send letters in an effort to reach their children through a non-governmental organization, but haven't received a response. The Colemans live in Stewartstown, Pennsylvania; the Boyles live outside Ottawa.

The families have not received any ransom demands and there are no clear signs of motive for their being held, but officials say the mere fact they were Westerners in hostile territory may have been reason enough.

Joshua Boyle was previously married to the sister of Omar Khadr, a Canadian man who spent 10 years at Guantanamo Bay after being captured in 2002 in a firefight at an al-Qaida compound in Afghanistan, but U.S. officials discount any link between that previous family tie and his capture. One called it a mere coincidence.

Two U.S. law enforcement officials described the investigation, speaking only on condition of anonymity because the probe is still underway.

The videos, each under two minutes long and featuring the couple seated in spare settings before cloth-draped backgrounds, contain no apparent clues — such as distinctive ethnic music — that might help investigators identify captors or locale. The video files do contain time stamps — one says May 20, 2013, the other Aug. 20, 2013 — but officials say those notations can easily be manipulated.

U.S. officials say the videos, in their low quality and lack of detail, bear some similarities to those the Taliban released about Bergdahl. They caution that while the videos establish beyond doubt that the couple were captured, they do not qualify as proof of life since there's no mention of current events that could help establish the time.

In addition to calling for government help in the videos, the couple recites names of family members and contact information.

"Just seeing her and seeing her face and hearing her, while it was very difficult, it was also something that relieved a lot of ambiguous anxieties and the fears," said Coleman's mother, Lyn.

Even as they hold out hope, the couples fret for their children's safety and for a grandchild born into captivity in a foreign country.

McCain, Sanders push for VA health care deal

By MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A half dozen key lawmakers were struggling Wednesday to quickly craft a compromise bill to help veterans facing long appointment waits at veterans hospitals and make it easier to fire administrators who covered up the delays.

The goal is to address an uproar over veterans' health care following allegations that veterans have died while waiting to see a Veterans Affairs doctor. Senators hope to pass the bill before Friday's 70th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Europe in World War II. Up to a dozen senators are expected to attend the ceremonies in France.

Leading the negotiations were Sen. John McCain of Arizona, the Republican presidential candidate in 2008, and independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and the only self-described socialist in Congress. They met face to face early Wednesday and again later in the day.

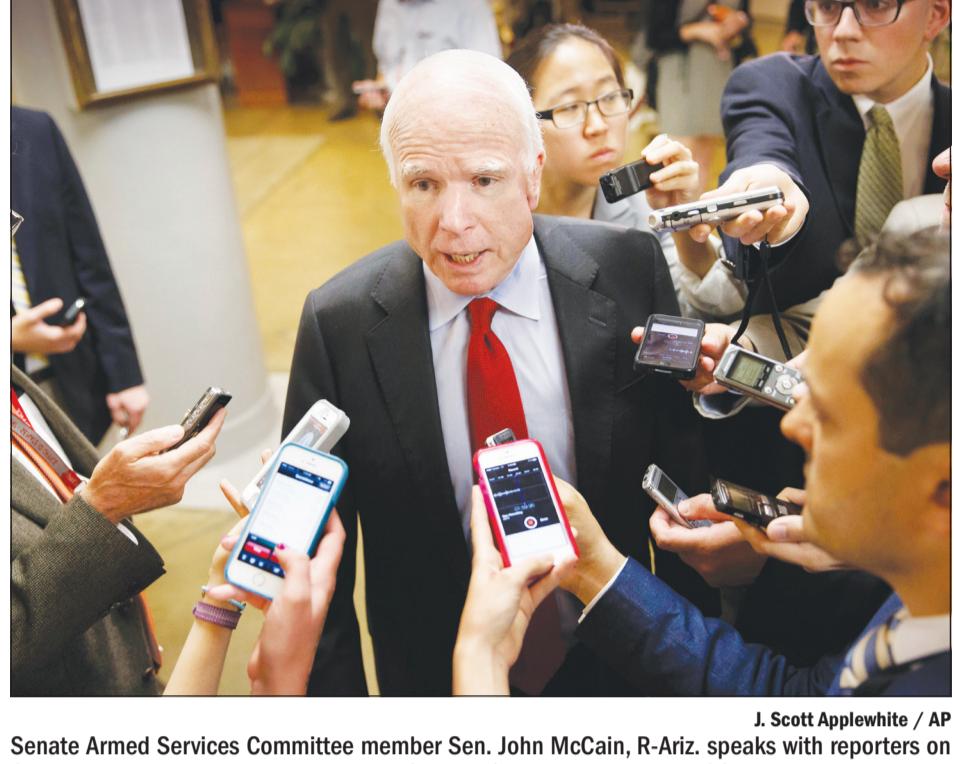
Also involved were Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev.; North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr, the senior Republican on the Veterans Affairs Committee; and Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

Sanders acknowledged that he and McCain make an unlikely pair, but he was upbeat about the prospects of quickly reaching a deal. "I'm cautiously optimistic," he said in an interview. "McCain is serious, I'm serious and Reid is serious."

McCain was less optimistic about a bill being passed this week. "I am not predicting anything," he told reporters.

The main stumbling block appeared to be over when and under what circumstances veterans could turn to doctors and other providers outside the 1,700-facility VA system for what is largely free care for them.

The two lead negotiators



J. Scott Applewhite / AP

Senate Armed Services Committee member Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., speaks with reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday. Sen. McCain and three other GOP senators introduced bill Tuesday that would give veterans more flexibility to see a private doctor if they are forced to wait too long for an appointment at a Veterans Affairs hospital or clinic.

couldn't agree on how to define it. Sanders said the primary issue was waiting times, while McCain said it was giving veterans a choice beyond VA for getting care.

An interim report by the VA's inspector general said veterans in Phoenix wait an average of 115 days for a first appointment — five times longer than the 24-day average the hospital had reported.

The inspector general said at least 42 VA facilities were under investigation, including the Phoenix VA hospital, where a former clinic director said as many as 40 veterans may have died while awaiting treatment.

Sanders has complained that the VA does not have enough doctors or nurses, particularly for primary care.

He is sponsoring a bill

that would authorize the VA to lease 27 new health facilities in 18 states. The VA system now has 150 hospitals and 820 clinics nationwide.

Miller, the House VA

chairman, said Sanders' bill was "too broad for the current discussion" and did not do enough to hold senior officials at the VA

accountable for falsified waiting lists and other problems.

The House last month passed a bill by Miller that would allow the VA to immediately fire as many as 450 regional executives and hospital administrators for poor performance.

Sanders has a similar bill but would give those managers more avenues

to challenge their terminations.

The differences didn't appear to be a major hurdle.

"The House bill is not terrible. It doesn't have

the due process I would like but, you know, we can

probably live with that. I can at least," Reid told reporters this week.

Meanwhile, Republican governors of six states, including Rick Perry of Texas and Rick Scott of Florida, asked President Barack Obama to give states authority to conduct reviews of all veterans health facilities within their borders. The governors said the state investigations would offer an independent review by officials "who have not been part of the current systemic crisis."

Besides Scott and Perry,

the letter was signed by

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom

Corbett, Kansas Gov. Sam

Brownback, Maine Gov.

Paul LePage and Louisian

Gov. Bobby Jindal.

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