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Sports



Cavaliers strike back to end sweep dreams

LeBron James leads Cleveland to 86-77 victory over Pistons to draw within 2-1 in best-of-seven series.

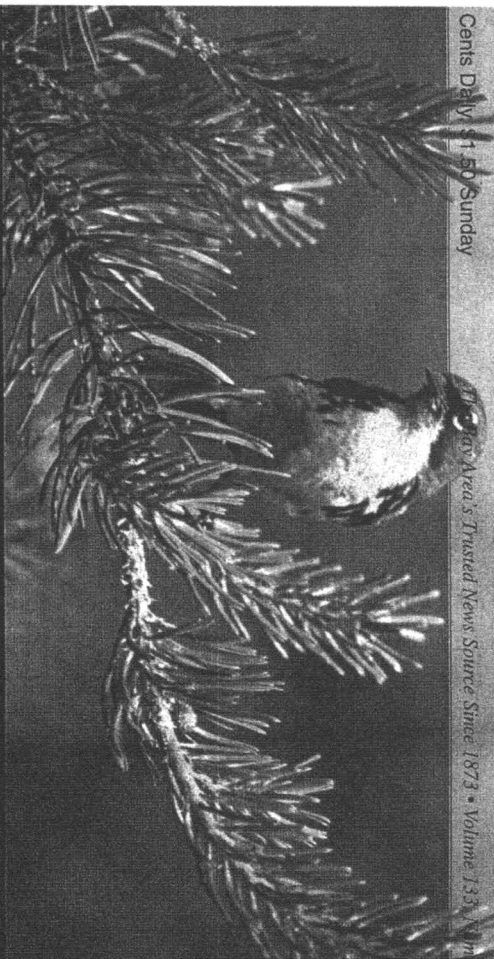
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Sunday, May 14, 2006



KIRTLAND'S WARBLER

Gary Nelson ■ Special to the Times

The Little Bird That Could

Almont principal wins battle for top Bangor Schools job

By CORINNE DEVRIES

TIMES WRITER

Bangor Township Schools has its new superintendent Tina A. Kerr was appointed to the post by a unanimous vote at a special meeting of the Bangor School Board of Education on Saturday morning.

Kerr, who currently works as middle school principal and curriculum director for Almont Community School in Lapeer County, said she will start around July 1.

Bangor Township is a good school district and I hope is to continue to help them grow and prosper," Kerr said. "I've just been extremely impressed with the people and I'm looking forward to having an enjoyable working relationship with the school community, as well as the community of Bay City."

Her initial goals are to get acclimated to the district, and develop the curriculum, she said. Kerr, 38, is one of two finalists the Bangor Township school board selected from a pool of 22 applicants. The other finalist, Kod Rock, is an elementary school principal for Unionville-Sebewaing Area Schools.

"Everyone felt they could go with either candidate,

TINA A. KERR

AGE: 38

PROFESSIONAL:

Curriculum director for Almont Community Schools, 2001-present; principal at Almont Middle School, 2005-present; principal at Orchard Primary School, 1998-2005. Also was an associate professor at Oliver College from 1997-98; a head women's basketball and softball, and

Resurgent species is a success

Tourist season takes flight

By JERRY MUINN

TIMES WRITER

ROSCOMMON - Perched in the uppermost branch of the jack pine tree, the little yellow-breasted bird sings for all it is worth. It's starting to sound like a come-back song.

The endangered Kirtland's warbler - a bird that numbered 167 pairs in 1974 - is a sight more common than ever these days, thanks to a multi-agency recovery team that worked to save it.

Guided tours through the bird's Northern Michigan home turf allow birders, ecotourists and others the chance to catch a glimpse of the rare bird.

About 90 percent of those who take the tour report Kirtland's sightings, according to Phil Huber, wildlife biologist for the U.S. Forest Service in Mio.

Credit the tiny bird's brazen behavior as it marks its exclusive territory, Huber said. And credit the state and federally

See **WARBLERS, 2A**

It's a bird: Jerry Weinrich, a retired biologist, points out a Kirtland's warbler to Bev McBride of Ottawa, Ontario.



By JERRY MUINN

TIMES WRITER

Spending tax money on a bird that few people will ever see doesn't sit well with some folks, acknowledges Dean Smith. "That's not what I have a vested interest in," says Smith, manager of the Holiday Inn-Oxford.

"The bird is the Kirtland's warbler, and to Smith and other business people it means tourist dollars during a slow time of year.

"We do know it's one of those home markets that's hard to identify," said Tom Ferguson, executive director of Michigan's Statewide Travel Association.

"The headlines about people that travel here all the way from Australia to put a check mark in their Audubon book, that's what's their impact? That's hard to identify."

See **TOURISTS, 2A**

COMING MONDAY: True North previews the Warbler Festival and the Tawas Point Birding Festival.

As factories close, workers need new survival skills

By RICK HAALUND

TIMES DETROIT BUREAU

DETROIT - Michigan's old manufacturing economy is dying, "slowly but surely," and the faster the state moves to a knowledge economy, the better, says former University of Michigan President James Duderstadt.

Many other smart folks, most of them holding advanced degrees and earning six-figure paychecks that don't come from manufacturers, agree.

"The future of Michigan is not in manufacturing employment," Dana Johnson, chief economist of Detroit-based Comerica Bank,

MORE INSIDE

See tips from experts on modern-day skills for landing and keeping a job. **Page 6A**

said at a recent conference. "The future is employment in knowledge sectors."

A number of influential groups, Duderstadt's Millennium Project at U-M among them, have recently produced papers urging state policy-makers to largely forget about manufacturing and pursue a new economic agenda that promotes jobs in knowledge sectors such as finan-

cial services, computer technologies, biotechnology and health care.

But beyond the ivory towers and the penthouses of economic power, average Michigan citizens are voicing a deep skepticism about the promise of the knowledge economy.

They're seeing hundreds of high-paying manufacturing jobs destroyed. And they wonder if Michigan can ever again prosper if its workers no longer earn good pay and decent benefits by making things, as generations of workers here have done.

See **WORKERS, 6A**

said Richard Kowalski, Bangor school board president. "She was a better fit for the district."

The search for a new superintendent began when the contract for current superintendent Michael Andruss was not renewed in February. Andruss will teach third grade at Bangor West Elementary, 3175 E. Wilder Road, in the fall and plans to retire in 2007. Andruss is paid \$100,000

See **BANGOR, 2A**

No foolin', states rush to rocket tourists into space

By ALICIA CHANG

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES - The promise of blasting thrill-seeking tourists into space is fueling an unprecedented rush to build snazzy commercial spaceports.

The Federal Aviation Administration is reviewing proposals from New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas to gateways for private space travel. Depending on the environmental reviews and other requirements, approval could come as early as this year and the site could be ferrying space tourists soon after.

The current spaceport boom recalls the mid-1990s when the first spaceport fad generated hype but no construction. Finally, technology may have caught up with starry-eyed plans.

Aerospace designer Burt Rutan, who is building commercial spacecraft fleet for British space tourism at the flurry of proposals.

"It's almost humorous to watch the worldwide hat of the spaceports," Rutan mused earlier this month at the International Space Development Conference. For decades, spaceports have been used mostly

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TODAY'S WEATHER
Showers, high 59°
More details, see Weather, Page 6B

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Thought for the day:
"There is nothing deep down inside except what we have put there ourselves."
-Richard Rorty
American philosopher and writer

WORLD

JACKBIRDS make a comeback

1A

That management has two main objectives - maintain 190,000 acres of 8- to 16-year-old jack pine forests for Kirtland's warbler nesting habitat, and control the population of the brown-headed cowbird, a non-native predatory species that lays its eggs in the nests of other birds.

In 1974, when the warbler's population stood at 167 mated pairs, parasitism by cowbirds caused the loss of an estimated 70 percent of Kirtland's warbler nests.

Less than one egg per nest, on average, produced a fledgling, according to Jerry Weirich, a retired DNR wildlife biologist who spent his career working with endangered species.

Stringent controls on cowbirds were begun during the critical nesting season, and cowbirds were trapped and killed.

"After that it went up to three per nest," Weirich said, speaking of successful warbler fledglings per nest.

But cuts in maintenance budgets already are being felt, according to Weirich.

Volunteers from the Audubon Society have taken over some of the guided tours. And Weirich volunteers for part of his career, trapping cowbirds and helping conduct the annual Kirtland's warbler census.

"Cowbird control is critical. It's probably the second most important thing, next to habitat management," Weirich said. "And you can have the habitat, but if there are cowbirds present it's not going to do a lot of good."

Craig Czarnacki, a field supervisor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, laments that the nearly \$50,000 his agency spent for "on-the-

ground summer operating costs" - vehicle and equipment maintenance and fuel - has been cut to almost \$25,000.

"That seems like it's been spiraling down year to year. There is less coming on our budget," he said.

So far those funding cuts have been absorbed by the same dedicated members of the warbler recovery team who fear cuts to the program they have fostered.

"When we hear there are going to be cuts in funding, we're on the phone calling each other, finding out what we can do," said Dr. Carol Bocetti, a professor at California University of Pennsylvania and recovery-team leader.

Members of the Detroit Audubon Society have petitioned Congress, calling for the restoration of those lost funds, Bocetti said.

"We work as a team. We have certain expertise from each agency. We try to manage the entire ecosystem. As a team, we don't recognize one single species," Bocetti said, noting many species benefit from Kirtland's habitat management - for example, Allegheny plum and Hills thistle, both protected prairie plants.

"It is an interesting partnership," agreed Czarnacki. "When you look at the whole jack pine ecosystem, there are a lot of species that ecosystem serves. We are so close to getting the warbler stabilized where we will have a sustainable population."

"It's an interesting issue. We want the species to be off the list, that's the goal of the Endangered Species Act. It's like an emergency room. We want a species to get better to get well and move on."

But Smith sees tangible proof those costs are offset. He said the bird's early-May migration from the Bahamas starts another migration of sorts - from May 15 until July 2, Smith watches tourists leave his lobby on guided Kirtland's warbler viewing tours.

"There is never a day that someone doesn't show up to take the tour," Smith said. "And I can tell you one thing - the time these people show up, how, in May? There is nothing else going on up here at all."

"It's a group that wouldn't show up if it wasn't for the bird. They eat, they buy gas, they buy souvenirs. They're definitely a group of tourists we went around here."

And for others, habitat management can be a money generator in and of itself.

Tammy Grezeszak, office manager for T.R. Timber in West Branch, said money generated by the Kirtland's habitat management effort provides jobs for some of the lumbering firm's 30 employees.

"Another benefit is the \$700 per acre the state earns when it sells logging interests in the Kirtland's habitat, a portion of which goes to counties for road maintenance, Grezeszak said.

Smith pointed to those economic benefits as further proof of the bird's impact.

"We're in a jack pine forest up here," Smith said.

"This is a good thing and it benefits everybody. It benefits homeowners and cabin owners as well," he said, noting the decreased fire danger in a well-managed forest.

"It's not a bad thing. It does more than leave a home for a little tiny bird," Smith said.

TOURISTS

FROM 1A

NASA and the Pentagon to rocket astronauts and satellites into orbit.

Traditional launch ranges are often spartan mixes of lonely launch pad towers, concrete runways and aircraft hangars. Many are located in remote coastal areas - Florida's Cape Canaveral being the best known - so that debris won't hit populated areas.

The current spaceport boom promises futuristic complexes that evoke the lessons. But cashing in requires a gamble.

None of the private rockets under development has been test-flown. And even once the FAA licenses any vehicles, the infant industry initially won't boast multiple daily flights - at \$100,000 to \$250,000 a head, the market is decidedly limited.

For states that invest early, however, the long-term economic benefits could be substantial. A recent study commissioned by New Mexico predicted that its proposed hub could net \$750 million in revenue and up to 5,800 new jobs by 2020. States with spaceports anchored by a reliable space-elevator and designed like a galactic Disneyland also could be a magnet for high-skill, high-wage labor and a sprout cottage industry.

Rockeiplane Kistler wants to launch from the Oklahoma Spaceport. Still pending FAA approval, that send rich passengers into the suburban space - a region about 60 miles above Earth. Several will build their rock-

ets this summer with tentative plans to fly as early as next year pending regulatory approval.

New Mexico, which inked a deal with Virgin Galactic last year to construct a \$225 million spaceport on 27 square miles of desert, is expected to select a winning architectural design from six entries on June 2.

While details of the spaceport designs are secret until a winner is chosen, tentative plans call for a complex built mostly underground. The facility, which would be funded by a mix of federal, state and local money, could open in late 2009. Virgin would have a 20-year lease on the facility.

Until then, Virgin Galactic, founded by British mogul Richard Branson, plans to fly in the first passengers from California's Mojave Airport, where the Rutan-designed SpaceShipOne became the first privately manned rocket to reach space in 2004.

Outside the seven government-run launch ranges, the Mojave hosts one of five non-federal licensed spaceports in the U.S. that serve both commercial and government interests. The non-federal ports are either state or privately operated.

Another space tourism operator, Rockeiplane Kistler, wants to launch from the Oklahoma Spaceport. Still pending FAA approval, that send rich passengers into the suburban space - a region about 60 miles above Earth. Several will build their rock-

STATES eye spaceports

FROM 1A

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CORRECTIONS

May 15 • 6:30 p.m. K-19 Public Awareness