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State bought the Northern Line for about \$5 million.

The federal Highway Bill of 1992, ISTEA (which stands for Intermobile Surface Transportation Enhancement Act and is pronounced "iced tea"), allowed money to be used for the first time for alternatives to car travel. New Hampshire used the money to buy rail beds, including the 59 miles of the Northern Line. The state now owns 300 miles of rail beds for industrial and business use and possible future rail use.

The Grafton group's first job was to salvage the steel rails and remove the ties. Because the railroad used cinder dust instead of stone in Grafton County, the trail was immediately ride-able in Grafton once the rails and ties were removed. And it has remained so; not many weeds grow because it is so compacted.

The impetus for the Grafton trail first came from snowmobilers who wanted to go around Lake Mascoma instead of having to wait for it to freeze to gain access to the trails. They first decked the bridges. The financing for bridge repair, removing ties, and surface material came from Recreational Trails Grants administered by DRED's Bureau of Trails. Trucks brought hard-pack to the trail, dumped it along the trail, and then they rolled it. Al Decato of Enfield and Tony Jukosky of Grafton led the work effort in 1999-2000.

Dick rode the rail the day before the meeting and passed about 100 people, couples walking along the lake, people pulling their groceries behind their bikes. He believes it is used well daily. Dick noted that this kind of project is entirely based on volunteer commitment.

Alex then said that there are two issues to address:

1. The materials to be used to cover the stone ballast; and
2. How to pay for it.

He introduced Nelson Lebo of Andover, who showed slides of Vermont's Mississquoi Trail. That trail was stone dust laid over ballast, resulting in the unpaved but compacted surface we are after.

Bob Ward of Andover then reported on two ideas regarding trail construction: He noted that Howard George of the Andover Recreation Committee had suggested that we move much of the ballast aside, to minimize the quantity of stone dust required. Bob expressed his enthusiasm for this idea.

He also reported that since our first meeting he had attended a meeting about the major reconstruction project of Route 11 between Roberts Market in Franklin, along Webster Lake, and into East Andover. Built in the 1930's, this section of Route 11 has a poured concrete base. At the expansion joints, the seams create a ripple effect.

The reconstruction will entail digging up and removing the concrete. Weaver Brothers in Concord is the contractor. Bob asked Weaver Brothers and DOT if the concrete could be crushed and spread on the rail bed. It is an idea that could possibly be a win-win for the contractor and for the trail: reducing transportation and disposal cost for contractor, and providing material for the trail.

Ed Dansereau and Tom Frantz then spoke about grant applications. They will attend the November 17 DOT course on the grants process. The grant application deadline is January 21, 2005, and there is much to do before then. The application, for a maximum of \$20,000, goes to DRED for review.

There followed an open discussion at which concern was expressed about the removal of the old ties. A member of the New Hampshire Musers Association asked if dogsleds could be allowed. Steve Rayno of Franklin spoke against dogsleds on the rail because they dig up the trail. Steve also reported that in Franklin the iron rails are currently being removed from Dyers Crossing in Andover to South Beach in Franklin.

Linda Wilson pleaded for trail users to be respectful of people who live along the trail. Some snowmobilers are out at 3 AM. That can cause problems, especially in Danbury where houses are right along the line.

Tom Jamieson called the group's attention to the fact that the Transportation Enhancement process runs on a

FIVE FOR FOOTBALL

By Steele Henderson

Five students from AE/MS have just finished the football season. There are two teams to choose from if you are from Andover: the Kearsarge Wildcats or the Merrimack Valley Blue Storm.

Four of the students played on the Wildcats – Devon Levesque, Katie Levesque, Derek Nowell, and Steele Henderson. Devon played on the seventh and eighth grade team, Derek played on the sixth grade team, and Katie and Steele played on the fourth and fifth grade team.

Devon is best described as quick, fast, and tough while playing running back and defensive back. Derek has become one of the better linemen in the league,

playing on both offense and defense.

Katie played middle linebacker with a desire to tackle the ball carrier that was matched by few. Steele played running back and defensive back and was described by defensive coach Mike West as "the toughest player on the team."

Sam Barrett played for the Merrimack Valley Blue Storm as a third grader and played safety. His highlights of the season were recovering a fumble and almost intercepting a pass.

A former AE/MS student, Derek Barton, also played for the Blue Storm. Derek is a hard-hitting lineman who plays offense and defense.

All the kids said they had fun and really like playing football.

Andover Basketball Starts Regular Season

By Abigail Lance
AE/MS student

It's time for Andover Basketball to start up again! Everyone is looking forward to a good, fun season this winter. Intramural basketball finished up on November 16, and all the teams worked hard for the top spot. However, only four of the six teams competed in the mini-tournament, and Team E came out on top.

Congratulations to Haley Levesque, Katie Smith, Kayla Doucet, Mika Martin, Josh Bond and Greg Hewitt for their hard work. Also a special thanks to Pam Brown for all her pre-season help.

The school teams for the regular season will be divided into boys and girls, with girls A-team coached by Mr. Stebbins and B-team coached by Mr. Silverstein, with assistance from

Mrs. Hill. Boys will be coached by Mr. Frantz, with assistance from Mr. McGovern and Mr. Hanlon.

Each team has approximately 14 players. The girls home opener versus St. Johns is on December 16, starting at 3:45. The boys home opener is on December 21.

All teams participate in the Hanover tournament, which takes place from February 19 to February 27. The boys team and the girls A-team participate in an additional tournament at Mascoma from February 26 to March 6.

A full schedule as well as more information about all the games and tournaments is available at the office, posted on the basketball bulletin board, and on the school's Web site at www.andover.k12.nh.us.

two-year cycle with applications due August 30, 2005.

The meeting concluded with the consensus that the FNRT-MC should move forward to incorporate as a non-profit organization and seek funding to open the trail to four-season use.

For more information about the DOT Bicycle/Pedestrian program, visit NHBikePed.com. For more information about the New Hampshire Musers Association, visit NHMusersAssoc.org.

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weather. Those going to Ragged Mountain Resort can bring money to purchase snacks. Cocoa is provided for those going to Blackwater Ski Area, and the snack bar is usually open.

For more information about Blackwater Ski Area and other local ski programs visit AndoverNH.org. For more information about Ragged Mountain Resort visit Ragged-Mt.com.



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