

Video Tour Highlights Big Improvements At MVHS

By Vicky Mishcon
Andover School Board

The Andover School Board is presenting a 15-year exclusive contract with Merrimack Valley High School (MVHS) to the voters at the Andover School District Meeting on Monday, March 3. The Board feels that Merrimack Valley offers strong academic opportunities to our students, as well as a newly expanded and improved facility to learn in.

Please take the time to watch the video tour of the high school, which will be aired on Channel 8 from Thursday afternoon, February 28, through Thursday morning, March 6, at 11 AM, 3:30 PM, and 7:30 PM.

Please understand that the video tour was sprung on the student tour guides at the last minute, and they had no time to prepare. With that in mind, sit back and enjoy the enthusiasm and pride these students show in their "new" school!

Students at MVHS have been enjoying their first year in what seems like a brand-new facility. Every room in the

school has received improvements with new lighting, new floors, new paint, or new furniture. The entire school has a new red brick exterior over new insulation, and new windows throughout. A brick clock tower entryway welcomes students, and they enter into an enlarged lobby with a completely redesigned office and administration area.

An extension on the right side of the building houses an expanded, two-level cafeteria and the library downstairs. Upstairs are the new art rooms and the new computer lab. At the back of the building is a new science wing.

On the interior, many exciting improvements include an expanded music room to accommodate a growing music program, new boys' and girls' locker rooms, and a new fully-equipped weight and exercise room. Wait 'til you see it!

Outside is a new energy- and cost-efficient wood chip burning plant, which heats both the middle school and the high school. More practice fields were also added at the back near the football field.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

By Tina Cotton
Andover Conservation Commission

Do you own land within 250 feet of a lake or stream? Changes in state legislation may affect what you can do on your land. If the current timelines are met, the legislature will have enacted changes in the laws in February, the laws (RSAs) will be posted on the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) Web site by March 1, and revised DES wetlands and shorelands application forms will be needed by April 1.

What are some of these proposed changes? A wetlands application will be needed for projects (construction, excavation, filling) within 50 feet of the water. A shorelands application will be needed for projects from 50 feet to 250 feet of the water.

If your project covers both areas, you must fill in both forms, but you only have to pay one fee. This fee is scaled according to the size of your project.

Fines for not adhering to the laws will increase. Dredge and fill permits will still be required for what we typically consider wetlands – wet, swampy, marshy areas.

Docks still need a wetlands permit. A new house or cottage must be set back 50 feet from the water. An existing house can be enlarged upward, but the existing footprint may not be enlarged. Building height in Andover is limited by the height that our fire departments can reach to fight a fire in the upper stories.

Impervious surfaces, such as roofs and paved driveways, must not ex-

ceed a certain percentage of the land acreage.

A natural woodland buffer must be maintained, and paths to the water must not concentrate storm-water runoff, contributing to erosion. All trees and woody shrubs are assigned point values depending upon trunk diameter size. The point total must exceed minimum requirements.

If you have dead or diseased trees on a non-wooded lot, they must be documented with photographs before removal. Stumps and roots must remain intact to prevent erosion. Normal trimming, pruning, and thinning of branches are permitted, but if done to maintain views, such cutting is limited to the bottom half of trees or saplings.

The creation of new lots must have at least 150 feet of shoreline frontage. Plans showing the location of structures, driveways, paths, trees, siltation and erosion controls, and shoreline must be presented. Use of fertilizer is still restricted.

In order to streamline the whole permitting process, the application is only one page, front and back, plus attachments of plans, maps, photographs, and a list of abutters. The DES has no more than 30 days to approve your completed application, and more inspectors will be hired to enforce the regulations.

The above is a greatly simplified condensation of proposed changes. You should check with the DES for more substantial and up-to-date requirements on their Web site at DES.state.nh.us/cspa/ and DES.state.nh.us/wetlands/.

Andover Recreation Comm.

By Alan Hanscom
Andover Recreation Committee

The Andover Recreation Committee has been working on a number of issues this winter. The purchase of land for Blackwater Park is the most significant initiative.

Building At Blackwater Park

Acquiring this 0.75 acres parcel of land from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) will enable construction of a recreation building adjacent to Blackwater Field. There is insufficient land today between identified wetlands and DOT property to site a building and septic system.

Funds for this purchase would come from the Blackwater Park Fund and would not affect the Town tax rate.

The proposed building would contain a bathroom, small kitchen area, field irrigation equipment, and much-needed storage area for sports equipment. Watch for plans at Town Meet-

ing and throughout the summer. **Skiing, Basketball, Softball, and Soccer**

The ski program at Ragged Mountain Resort was a great success. About 117 students enjoyed the slopes on Friday afternoons this winter.

The season started out a little iffy during the January thaw, but the heavy snows in January and February that wreaked havoc on travel and school attendance made for excellent ski conditions by late February.

Basketball season wrapped up at the end of February. All teams had a fun and exciting series of games. What our teams lacked in numbers was made up in spirits.

As one season ends, another begins. Sign up for softball and baseball on Thursday, March 6, from 6 PM to 7:30 PM and on Saturday, March 8, from 9 AM to 12 PM at the Andover Elementary/Middle School.

Soon after that will be soccer sign-ups for next fall.



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