

are available on line at [www.imlaycitymich.com](http://www.imlaycitymich.com) or at the City office located at 150 North Main St. There is no charge to participate in the contest but the Imlay City Area Chamber of Commerce must receive entry forms by May 1. The Imlay City Area Chamber of Commerce is located at 150 North Main St. Entry forms can be faxed to the Chamber's office at 810-724-8821.

All preparations for the salsa, said Dunlop, including cutting of vegetables, must be completed at the festival, starting at 10 a.m. and contestants are responsible for bringing all ingredients and utensils necessary for their recipe and a table. The festival will supply tablecloths, cups for salsa samples and tortilla chips.

Judging will take place from noon to 1 p.m. with the community naming the winner, who will be awarded a \$50 "Chamber Buck" valid at participating Imlay City Chamber of Commerce members.

Information regarding the Cinco de Mayo celebration can be found on the Imlay City Chamber of Commerce web site, [www.imlaycitymich.com](http://www.imlaycitymich.com) or the Imlay City DDA web site, [www.icdda.com](http://www.icdda.com).

# Timebank Coalition seeks more participants

BY ABIGAIL WISE  
Contributing Writer

**LAPEER** — Paul St. Louis is banking on more time — more time in the House of Hope Timebank Coalition that is. After nearly a year since its official launch last May, the timebank, organized by St. Louis, is building wheelchair ramps and looking for more participants. Though the program's membership has been a little disappointing for St. Louis, he said he is optimistic about the timebank's future and proud of the work participants have accomplished.

Thus far, members of the timebank have worked on several projects, including installing two wheelchair ramps on homes, one in Imlay City and one in Lapeer. The first ramp, installed in the home of a veteran who had just had his leg removed, allowed the man to return home. The timebank receives one to two requests for wheelchair ramps each month. "It's an issue we can address," said St. Louis.

Though Lapeer's timebank is the ninth largest in the state, it has only 40 members. St. Louis hopes to see that number increase as the bank goes into its second year. "I want to see it become

the largest timebank in the state." The bank will need more than 160 members to achieve that goal, said St. Louis.

The timebank is an excellent opportunity for residents of Lapeer County to share their skills and build a stronger community, according to St. Louis. "My basic goal with the timebank ... is helping people in the community realize that we can help each other," he said.

By performing hours of volunteer work, participants in the timebank, deposit hours in their "bank." Those hours can be cashed in at any time to receive services from other timebank participants. "It's a way where you can take two groups who have challenges ... you can put them together, and they can both benefit," said St. Louis.

One of the largest difficulties with the Lapeer timebank has been a lack of proactive skill matching. While the bank has a website listing both offered and requested services, the responsibility of matching timebank pairs has fallen largely on St. Louis. "We were hoping for people to do more match-ups on their own," said St. Louis, though, he noted, "it's not just specific to our area." Other timebanks are having the

same problem. "It's not just the numbers, it's getting people involved actually helping each other."

St. Louis encourages people to sign up for the timebank and to be creative in the services they offer and request. Some of the more surprising services currently offered through the timebank include a disc jockey, digital scrapbooking and genealogical research assistance. Some of the most requested services include transportation, help with spring cleaning and yard work assistance.

For people who are "time rich but cash strapped," the timebank is an excellent opportunity to give and receive assistance, said St. Louis. Everyone has talents, and the timebank encourages participants to draw on those talents to offer services in the bank. The best part of the program, said St. Louis, is "the community coming together and saying 'wow, look at what we can do.'"

For more information on Lapeer's timebank or to sign up as a member, visit [www.hope.timebanks.org](http://www.hope.timebanks.org) or call St. Louis at 810-441-0322. There is no cost to participate in the Timebank Coalition.

them "I don't feel valued."

Faced with a tightening financial noose, the board has had one meeting with its teachers union and spent the end of its meeting Monday in closed session discussing upcoming negotiations with AFSCME, the union representing most of the district's non-teaching staff.

The board voted unanimously to offer the teachers union a buy-out program for a second time in three years. This time, however, it won't be as generous — half the \$40,000 that was offered three years ago — and it comes with the possibility of layoffs, if the union rejects the offer or enough teachers don't take advantage of it.

The board voted to offer a \$20,000 buy-out, made in two equal installments to a 403b plan, the public sector equivalent to a 401k, and to pay the teacher's unused sick days into the same plan. Teachers would have to have 13 years with the district to participate and wouldn't be able to withdraw money from the plan until the reach the age of 59 1/2.

Muir noted that although it sounds counter-intuitive, if just five eligible teachers say yes to the proposal, it would save the district \$1.023 million.

fighters were closing off streets around the Blind Fish, firefighters in Attica were keeping an eye on arcing wires on Bowers Road and the Imlay City Fire Dept. had sent a crew to Brown City Road in

## Anonymous cash donation funds improvements to Sutherland

BY KRYSTAL JOHNS  
810-452-2601 •  
[kjohns@mihomepaper.com](mailto:kjohns@mihomepaper.com)

**HADLEY TWP.** — An anonymous donation has made improvements possible at Sutherland Nature Sanctuary that likely wouldn't have happened for years.

The Lapeer Land Conservancy

treasurer, said he wanted to get involved in some volunteer projects in the township. They started replacing the old, beat-up boardwalk on April 13 and it is already completed.

Brown said they would like to take the leftover money from the donation, possibly apply for more funding from other sources, and do a few more projects at Sutherland, such as making the trail wheelchair-accessi-