

Kent
County
Daily
Times
1/25/10

wick.

This week the town council and school committee will have their annual meeting to compare notes and give projections about the upcoming fiscal year.

It's going to be difficult, observes School Committee Vice-Chair Bruce Vanasse, because nobody knows what the state is going to do next.

"Right now we're still in limbo be-

go on as he drafts another budget is what has happened in the past year, Vanasse said, but with possible cuts looming at the end of the this year, no one knows exactly how this year is going to end and where that will put the next fiscal year.

"It's like trying to hit a moving target here," Vanasse said. "So obviously, and we know the town council is in the same boat as well, this is just a proce-

a meeting where "we talk plainly and roll out the financial program that we're in"

quasar said.

"We ing for into the we're level-bi

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dural meeting trying to get the budget rolling now that it's January. Everyone needs to work together and both sides of the party are trying to see what we can do. It's unfortunate that everything is being cast downward [to the cities and towns]. We're just trying to keep

Official: Probation program helping

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WEST WARWICK — West Warwick probation and parolees may be getting a leg up thanks to a program launched several months ago between the town of West Warwick, the Department of Corrections and several other community agencies.

Christine Imbriglio, probation and parole supervisor for the Kent region, said West Warwick residents who are either recently placed on probation or parole, or who are new to West Warwick, must attend a forum held at the West Warwick Town Hall. At the forum, attendees hear all about the stipulations of probation and or parole and also about the variety of services that are available to them.

Imbriglio said this program is intended to be beneficial to the parole and probationers as they would typically not receive the information for several weeks from their individual probation officers.

According to Imbriglio, paperwork processes set first time visits between probation officers and probationers back at least four to six weeks from the time they are sentenced. This program allows them access to the information within just a few weeks, she said.

"Typically they are not seen by a probation officer for at least a few weeks, but now that they are required to come here, I am seeing them almost right away," Imbriglio said. "This forum happens once a month so all of the cases that are assigned within last few weeks are required to attend.

"Now when they come to their first meeting with their PO, they come into the office geared with information from the forum and we know that they

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Cov. kids do the ro

COVENTRY — The Robotics Team at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School attended the ninth annual Rhode Island First Lego League Robotics Championship on Jan. 9 at Roger Williams University. The team was among 49 other teams all working towards having a successful robot as well as an impressive research project to present to judges.

Students reviewed the challenge criteria on the First Web page www.firstlegoleague.org and began planning their project. The group had to recognize a problem with transportation in a community and follow that problem up with research and a proposed solution. Students chose to research railroads and why railroad accidents occur. They consulted with a worker

from Amtrak who helped them cions in designing possible solut

Students also had to create and bot to complete specific tasks in frame of 2.5 minutes. Some of the cluded driving on a bridge, acti markers, transporting loops to avoiding sensor walls, and transp test figure.

Overall, students performed ve. of the students on the team are fics students who have never pr built using this type of equipme completed a large amount of wc amount of time. Even on the day c the team continued to improve the

...need to develop a long-range strategy. This is not a time for politics, it's a time for public policy leadership. I say that on the local and the state level."

Thomas, who has been meeting with the school department leadership, says the public can expect a meeting where "we talk plainly and roll out the financial predicament that we're in. Part of it ties into the fiscal year 2009, the overspending in the schools of \$3 million plus, part of it is going to be addressing the \$3 million that the governor proposes to take out of vehicle excise tax, and then

Warwick Budget — far beyond the caps set by Senate Bill 3050.

"The recession was deep and it was sharp and the recovery is going to be slow and it's going to be long," Thomas said. "To expect the taxpayers to shoulder this entire revenue shortfall is unrealistic. Here again we're going to have to go into this with a spirit of collaboration."

The meeting is scheduled at the John F. Deering Middle School at 6 p.m. on Wednesday. The public is welcome to attend. Sheehan could not be reached for comment on Friday afternoon.

Program helps keep parolees on track

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are because they say things like 'you said this and this and that at the forum, how do we follow up with that now,' and that is great," she said. "Our goal, our mission, is to eliminate those basic need barriers that people have so that we are able to hold them more accountable and it seems to be working."

According to Imbriglio, West Bay Community Action, one of the partners in the program reports a consistent spike in contact calls made immediately after each forum held in West Warwick. Other community agency partners, report similar findings, Imbriglio said.

"This is a very hard thing to measure, but from our experience, I think a big impact is being made," she said. "And one of the other things about this partnership that is really important for the public to understand is that those people that are attending these forums are the same individuals that are already going to agencies like West Bay and the Kent Center to get services, but now, by all of us being on the same page, we are able to coordinate and form an instant connection between efforts.

"We are helping with social service needs and that is the dynamic that is making it so effective," she said. "When you take all of the agencies and put them together you are taking the first step toward community safety.

"If someone commits a crime in Woonsocket and lives their whole life in Woonsocket, then moves to West Warwick, how would West Warwick police know about them, well they wouldn't, but now with this requirement, when they move into this town they are required to go, West Warwick police see them and get familiar with them and they learn about all of the services available to them as residents of this town," she said. "It is a win, win for everyone."

Imbriglio said that West Warwick was selected as one of the lead communities to try such a program because it has one of the largest populations of offenders in the Kent County area. She said the West Warwick Police has been an integral component in making the program a success and according to recent data, the program has become so successful that other communities have expressed strong interests in developing similar programs in their communities as well.

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