United Way hopes new-look campaign will spark giving

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEM

United Way of Northern Ozaukee kicked off its campaign last weekend with its beer garden — a kickoff that continues with a farm-to-fork dining experience at Twisted Willow on Saturday.

The events aren’t the traditional kick off for the agency, which is fitting for an organization that is taking new steps this year to reach its goal of raising $360,000.

The goal is less than last year’s $400,000 target, which the group didn’t meet, but Executive Director Barbara Bates-Nelson said her personal goal remains the $400,000.

“That’s any goal because of the needs we have in the county and the requests we’re getting from out partner agencies,” she said.

“If we can exceed that ($360,000) goal, that’s great,” she said.

This year’s campaign starts off on a strong footing, with Port Washington State Bank issuing a $25,000 leadership challenge.

The bank will match any new donations of $300 or more and, if someone increases their donation from last year to $300 or more, the bank will match the increase.

“That’s big,” Bates-Nelson said.

This year, United Way has also instituted a campaign cabinet of volunteers to help shepherd the fundraising efforts, she said.

The cabinet includes this year’s honorary campaign chairman Bill Henkle, a former educator with the Port Washington-Saukville School District, Bob Henkle of Renthauf, Boerner Van Deuren law firm, former Mequin-Thiensville School Supt. Karl Hertz and Carol Hertz, former curriculum director with the Cedarburg School District.

In addition, the cabinet includes Jim Asmussen of Asmussen Wealth Management, Debbie Fedel of Seek Careers and Staffing Inc., Todd Latif of Associated Bank and Joe Graf, former president of the Volunteer Center.

“I’m excited about the people we have recruited to help us,” Bates-Nelson said.

“The needs we’re seeing are getting more complex, and you have to attack them from different fronts. They’re interrelated and difficult to tackle.

“I think this group can help us tell the story of what we’re trying to accomplish here.”

In recent years, United Way of Northern Ozaukee has undertaken initiatives to help prevent homelessness in the county, to help children and to aid in mental health efforts.

United Way also helps fund 13 agencies, such as Family Sharing, Ozaukee Family Services, Advocates of Ozaukee and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

“Working together with our community, collaborating with several more agencies, particularly in areas like mental health,” Bates-Nelson said.

Traditionally, United Way has not only allocated funds for the agencies it works with but also provides community impact grants for new programs.

Just this year, the United Way didn’t award any impact grants, instead joining with the United Ways in Washington and Sheboygan counties to help establish the Child Advocacy Center in Ozaukee County.

This year, Bates-Nelson said, she hopes to be able to once again provide the community impact grants.

In addition to fundraising, United Way is again planning its stone soup event on Oct. 6.

Anyone who wants to donate fresh vegetables or nonperishable food items to be used in the soup may drop them off in advance at Bates-Nelson’s home or at Anns & Associates in downtown Port Washington on Sept. 20, when volunteers will prepare the ingredients.

A donation barrel is also set up at Fox Bros. Piggly Wiggly in Port Washington.

Anyone interested in providing ingredients for the soup or volunteering for the event is asked to contact Bates-Nelson by calling (248) 613-7855 or emailing uwno@sbcglobal.net.

Northern Ozaukee agency kicks off annual fundraising drive with matching grant in hand, more modest goal

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Port Exploreum still picking up the pieces after serious flooding

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEM

The Port Exploreum, which was severely damaged by the Aug. 27 flood, won’t be open until at least next week.

“I don’t want to get it open, but I suspect we’re not going to be open this week,” said Wayne Chruscial, executive director of the Port Washington Historical Society, which operates the museum. “Now it’s looking more like next week.”

Chruscial said Tuesday the elevator still isn’t up and running, a situation he hoped to have resolved early this week.

“We’re waiting for some parts,” he said.

“At this point, I think it may be two weeks,” he said.

Because of the issue, the Exploreum has cancelled its planned showing of the movie “My Favorite Wife” on Friday, Sept. 14.

The movie was to be shown in the second floor of the Exploreum because the flood significantly damaged the lower level of the museum.

The lower level of the Exploreum won’t be open for several months, Chruscial said.

But the staff has moved several pieces of technology from the lower level and relocated them elsewhere in the building, he said.

“That way, visitors will still get to experience some of the technology we have,” he said.

The popular Fish Daze game, which is being operated with a new computer after the flood destroyed the former operating system, has been moved to the first floor of the Exploreum, as has the lake ecology quiz, while the sailing kiosk is now on the second floor.

Chruscial said he hoped to have completed emergency repairs for the cost of repairing the museum by the end of the week.

SECTIONS OF walls that were soaked during Aug. 27 flooding in the basement of the Port Exploreum have started to dry out and the museum can work to make repairs and reopen.

Photo by Sam Arendt