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for Senate?**

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of summer**

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Mayor Ed Engler and Whitney McCallum listen as Madelyn Young, Cali Andriski and Riley Clark-Patten bring forth ideas about how to solve city problems posed by Engler during McCallum's 'genius hour' at Laconia Middle School last week. (Karen Bobotas/for The Laconia Daily Sun)

'Geniuses' work city issues

By RICK GREEN
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — Mayor Ed Engler often wrestles with problems that have their roots in the region's demographics.

The city's population has held steady at about 16,000 for many years, even as it has skewed progressively older. There is an abundance of retirees but not enough young families to help create a more vibrant and prosperous city.

How does Laconia attract younger people to become new residents without raising taxes in a way that would provide a disincentive to growth?

That was the problem Engler posed to Whitney McCallum's sixth-grade class at Laconia Middle School. The "Genius Hour" class empowers students to explore an issue and suggest creative answers to complicated questions.

Google and other companies popularized the concept of giving employees the freedom and time to consider challenges in a thoughtful and open way. Educators now do this in a classroom setting as a way to promote critical thinking and knowledge.

Several community leaders approached the sixth-graders with problems to be solved. Cali Andriski, Riley Clark and Maddie Young worked on the mayor's challenge.

They decided that new residents are attracted by safety and academic excellence.

They felt a survey would be in order. They want to gauge what people know of local schools and what they expect of them.

The girls also did some research. They found a New Hampshire town called Madbury that seems particularly kid-friendly and safe. They plan to contact leaders in Madbury to learn more about what they did to be successful.

They also are reaching out to the city's Parks and Recreation Department to ask about the possibility of more recreational opportunities for youths, maybe a pool or water park.

Other young people in the class were asked to consider problems associated with expanding the WOW Trail in the city. There are financial issues, and in some

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City to consider historic district

By RICK GREEN
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — City Councilors agreed on Tuesday to consider establishing a Historic District Commission to protect some of the oldest structures in the area, including St. Joseph Church, which is slated to be demolished.

Backers of preserving the church packed the City Council chambers to seek such a commission.

A City Council committee will consider the request in a public

meeting at 6 p.m. on Monday, June 3.

Bishop Peter Libasci has decided to raze the 1929 church before selling the property. He has not revealed the name of the buyer.

City Councilors on Tuesday also ordered City Manager Scott Myers to write a letter to church leaders asking for the buyer's name so the city can understand what the property will be used for and asking for the cost of demoli-

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State sues 3M, DuPont, other chemical companies

By MICHAEL CASEY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CONCORD — New Hampshire has sued eight companies including 3M and the DuPont Co. for damage it says has been caused statewide by a class of potentially toxic chemicals found in pizza boxes, fast-food wrappers and drinking water.

The state becomes the second in the nation to go after the makers and distributors of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances or PFAS and the first to target statewide contamination. The lawsuit also names Chemours Company, Chemguard Inc., Tyco Fire Products, Buckeye Fire Equipment,

Kidde-Fenwal Inc. and National Fire Foam Inc.

New York state has sued six companies that made firefighting foam containing PFOS and/or PFOA chemicals that it says have contaminated drinking water in two communities and groundwater in another.

"The actions we are taking today is intended to ensure that those responsible for PFAS contamination to our state's drinking water supplies and other natural resources are held accountable," New Hampshire Attorney General Gordon McDonald said. "As alleged in the

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