

REDDING SENTINEL



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State seeks new contracts for nuclear power, renewables

By John Moritz

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) said on January 30 that it would begin seeking new contracts for carbon-free electricity from large power generators, including the Millstone Nuclear Power Station in Waterford.

The announcement marks the start of the agency's latest round of "grid scale" clean energy procurement, which began in 2011. Several years later, officials used that process to provide a lifeline to Millstone after its owner threatened to shut the plant down due to the difficulty of competing against lower-cost natural gas. As part of a 10-year contract that expires in

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Photo by Toby Welles

Nature bestowed a "snow toupee" on General Putnam at Putnam Memorial State Park. If you have a photo you'd like to see featured here, e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org.

Tuning up for Redding's America 250

Preparations underway for spring events and symphony concert

By Jessie Wright

An idea, a vision, and a challenge to pull it all off – preparations are now underway to bring the Greater Bridgeport Symphony to Redding on May 30 for an historic and educational concert to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the country's founding and Redding's role in the American Revolution.

The concert program, set to take place at Joel Barlow High School, will feature Charles Ives's celebrated work, *Three Places in New England*, specifically the movement titled "Putnam's Camp," which was inspired by the composer's visit to the local landmark. Charles Ives lived in Redding for many years and was a highly influential 20th century composer in American music.

The event is being spearheaded by Sean McNamara, a member of the Redding Historical Cemetery Committee and the owner of Redding Nursery. McNamara, a musician himself who fell in love with music while he was a student at Joel Barlow High School, thought that a concert featuring Ives's work and student musicians was a

perfect intersection of Redding's history, musical legacy, education, and patriotism.

"Problem with Charles Ives, is it's very complicated music," said McNamara. "There was no way that the high school band was going to be able to play it."

Enter the professional musicians of the Greater Bridgeport Symphony. In addition to performing the work on May 30, musicians with the Symphony will be joined by Barlow musicians in the second half of the concert to play beloved patriotic classics together.

The idea and vision are set – now, McNamara, along with a small team of friends and community connections, are working to make it a reality.

"What we need now is to get funding to make it all happen. It's going to cost about \$30,000 to bring (the symphony) in," said McNamara. Half of that amount will be in ticket sales if community interest in the event is high enough. The other half will need to be through donations and sponsorships. McNamara has set up a

website to be the landing page for the project (redding250.com), and all donations go directly to Greater Bridgeport Symphony, a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit.

McNamara also hopes to build momentum for the concert event by partnering with several local organizations for other, smaller Redding's America 250 events throughout the spring. This evening, February 5 at 7:00 p.m., Town Co-historians will kick off the efforts with a talk at Mark Twain Library called "Redding During the Revolution." McNamara is in talks with Redding Land Trust, Putnam Memorial State Park, Redding Historical Society, Meadow Ridge, and others to put together additional programming throughout the spring.

"Redding has all these really great groups and great support," McNamara said. "I just want to tie all of that together if I can and include everyone." ■

Learn more or support at redding250.com

REDDING'S BIG OUTDOORS

Backyard tracking

By Jessie Wright



Photo by Jessie Wright

After five days of single-digit temperatures, my son had had it. "Mom," he implored, "can we please go play outside?" I too had been itching to take our usual weekly outing to one of our parks

or open spaces, but the snow was still too deep and the trails too icy. We settled for our own backyard, bundling up and deciding 18 degrees with sunlight felt downright balmy.

The patio was covered in dark speckles, the shells of the sunflower seeds we had filled our birdfeeder with before the big snow. For days, my kids had pulled up their camping chairs near the door in our kitchen to watch "bird TV" as hundreds of nuthatches, cardinals, sparrows, chickadees, blue jays, and woodpeckers feasted and fought over the oily snacks. As we crunched over the mess they had made, thousands of their delicate footprints – across our patio furniture, under the magnolia tree, along our doorstep – retold the drama.

We trudged through the pathways our dogs had created in

the last week around and across the yard, ribbons of their exuberant daily chases frozen into the drifts. One pathway brought us to a gentle slope on the east side of the yard, untouched by canine romping. Looking more closely, we saw little clumps of four pawprints, about a foot-and-a-half between each group. "What's this?" I wondered. Too big for a squirrel, too crisp for our pups. "Bunny tracks!" I exclaimed, and my son abandoned the ice chunk he had been licking to come look.

Nearby, a group of thin lines in the snow spread out before us like an intricate map. Above them was an adolescent weeping cherry tree, its long branches brushing against the snowpack. I had never thought of trees making tracks before, but

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Bridges make capital planning a moving target

By Rocco Valluzzo

As it prepares to examine the capital spending plans of several municipal departments, the Board of Finance accepted the report of the Long Range Financial Planning Committee at its Monday, January 26 meeting.

In the report, Town Treasurer Wes Higgins identified \$23.84 million in spending over the next five years. The Town has about 50 projects identified over the next five years, including a renewed road plan.

The largest capital expenditure is the replacement of the four bridges that were destroyed in the August 2024 storm, which on a gross basis is just under \$11 million and net after expected support from the Federal government and State agencies a little over \$4.3 million.

Higgins noted that the bridge replacement program is a complex project in terms of design as well as timing. The Committee recommends using bond anticipation notes as projects play out over the next several years.

"The bond anticipation note allows us to fund these projects as they ramp up with a little more flexibility and lock in long-term financing when we know exactly how much and when our commitment to the bridges will kick in," said Higgins.

Oxford, a town similarly affected by the flood, borrowed \$4 million as part of a \$16 million bond anticipation note for its bridge work at 2.7%. Higgins felt that this perhaps would be a bit lower now that short rates have eased.

Overall, the estimate over the next five years from the Redding Board of Education is about \$4.1 million, said Higgins. It has identified its projects in two ways: those to be completed within the next two years and others that are identified but not yet within near-term focus.

"They freely admit that the roof projects need to be assessed again," he said. "That will be updated in due course as it does not appear as if the roof needs to be accomplished in the next two years or so."

The Water Pollution Control Commission (WPCC) has six capital expenditures totaling about \$1.2 million. Two involve roofing.

The Committee also recommended that, should surpluses occur in this fiscal year or next, the Board of Finance consider designating some or all of those available funds towards future capital spending. This will help cushion the blow of a rather significant spending requirement in the next three years.

Board of Finance Chairman Ward Mazzucco said the timing of the municipal and school projects will have an impact on how much the Town borrows and when. He noted opportunities to defer some of the capital items concerning schools and inquired if there were any other opportunities to

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