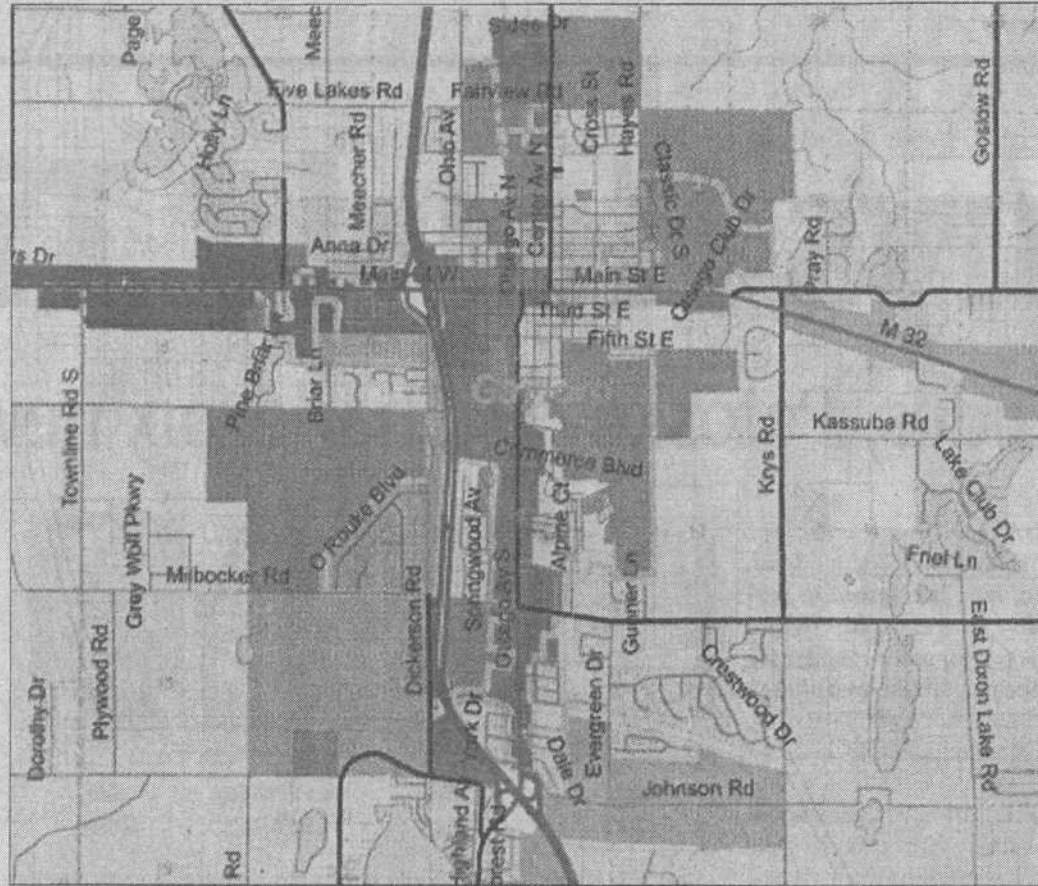


Fact Book details county's landscape

By Mary Jergenson
Staff Writer

OTSEGO COUNTY — Did you know Otsego County is 336,693 acres in size, and that state forest land accounts for 90,000 of those acres? Or that the elevation in Otsego County ranges from 900 to 1,500 feet and that Gaylord has the highest elevation of any incorporated city in the state? Were you aware Otsego County holds the headwaters to five rivers — the AuSable, Black, Manistee, Pigeon and Sturgeon — or that Elmira Township was once known as the “Certified Seed Potato Capital of Michigan?”

This information and much more can be learned from the Otsego County “Fact Book,” a product of almost a year of research conducted by the Land Information Access Association (LIAA) of Traverse City. LIAA Executive Director Joe VanderMeulen calls the “Fact Book,” the first step in the process of planning. “Based on what we learn from the ‘Fact Book,’ we will establish priorities and possibilities for the area. In turn we will discuss the consequences of those decisions and how they



The “Fact Book” details zoning and geography of Otsego County.

will impact the people and the environment,” said VanderMeulen.

The book will be unveiled

at a special meeting Wednesday at 6 p.m. in the University Center. Otsego County Land

Use Director Richard

Edmonds and VanderMeulen are hoping for a large turnout for the public release of the information. “We want to give

everyone who has a stake in this project the opportunity to share their views and input,” VanderMeulen explained to the Otsego Planning Commission Monday evening.

Assistance from LIAA, for what Edmonds calls the “first half of the master plan process” was provided by a \$65,000 assistance grant from LIAA approved last January. Edmonds is in the process of securing a \$90,000 grant from the People and Land (PAL) Foundation of Lansing to complete the update of the county’s 8-year-old master plan. Edmonds expects the master plan update to be finished in six to nine months.

Upon completion, VanderMeulen suggests reviewing the master plan document every five years to update goals and set new ones. He explained, “It’s important to see how far you’ve come, when planning for the future.”

To access informational maps of Otsego County visit online at www.partnershipsforchange.cc/otsego/.

The book release is open to the public, and residents of Otsego County are encouraged to attend.