

Indianford Dam on minds of school board

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By Carrie Michael/The Janesville Gazette Staff

EDGERTON--The Edgerton School Board has a message for fellow county and school boards: support repairs for the Indianford Dam.

The school board is worried that if Rock County decides to rip out the dam, Lake Koshkonong will drain and take a huge chunk of property tax base with it.

Lakefront residents pay a sizable portion of the taxes that support the Edgerton School District. School board members believe nearby school districts are in the same situation--a shrinking Lake Koshkonong means a shrinking tax base.

Without the lakefront taxpayers, the tax burden would shift to other residents in the Edgerton School District. But many people seem unconcerned about that possibility, said school board member Brian Donnelly.

That lack of understanding is why the board decided Monday to send letters to every supervisor on the Rock, Jefferson and Dane county boards and every member of the Janesville, Milton, Fort Atkinson and Jefferson school boards, asking them to support repairing the dam.

"I don't think they realize that if you live in the Edgerton School District, it's going to cost you a tremendous amount of money," Donnelly said about the dam removal. "The rest of the taxpayers of Edgerton are going to pick up the rest."

The district hasn't yet calculated the potential revenue loss.

Donnelly said comments from the community have frustrated him. Edgerton residents who live outside the lake district have told him they don't care what happens to the dam because they think the loss of lakefront property won't affect them.

The Edgerton School Board invited Jerry Richardson, Rock-Koshkonong Lake District treasurer and Newville marina owner, to Monday's meeting to present basic information about lake district property values.

Richardson said even though the lake district isn't

fully within the Edgerton School District boundaries, both tax burdens are related.

Donnelly and board member Greg Johnson will write the letter asking for support. All school board members will sign it.

Superintendent Norm Fjelstad said, "I don't think people realize the issue is: Who is going to pick up those taxes? It's going to be everybody else."

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