

GASHOLDER

# Engineers to investigate basement

This is the latest step toward preserving the historic structure

By DAVID BROOKS  
Concord Monitor

Most people like Concord's iconic gasholder because of what's above ground: the handsome round brick building with a charmingly off-tilt cupola. But for those in the know, the underground part is what matters.

And that's where engineers will be Wednesday, Dec. 17, in the latest step toward preserving the historic

structure.

A crew from Structures North Consulting Engineers and Yankee Steeplejack Company will go beneath the floor to determine the condition of the internal machinery that held and pressurized coal gas for six decades. It's possible that they will be the first people to enter that space since operations began in 1888, said Althea Barton of the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.

Many gasholder buildings still exist, including a small one at St. Paul's School, but Concord's is one



Monitor file

SEE GASHOLDER A6 Crews will be investigating the basement of the Concord Gasholder today.

SCHOOL CHOICE

# Fresh eyes for review panel

After lapse, Education Freedom Account oversight committee meets with new chair

By JEREMY MARGOLIS  
Concord Monitor

In its first meeting in over a year, the bipartisan legislative committee tasked with overseeing the state's education freedom account program took the unexpected step on Tuesday of electing a Democrat to serve as its chair.

The move, which occurred because one of the Republican representatives on the five-member committee was absent, could lead to increased scrutiny of the controversial program, which nearly doubled in size this year after lawmakers removed an income eligibility requirement.

The new chair, Sen. Suzanne Prentiss of Lebanon, said she planned to spend the next year looking into the program's effect on public education funding and how families become eligible for an additional special education stipend. She also expressed support for a public accounting of the assessment results for students in the program.

Prentiss' power will not be limitless. The committee, which was established by statute when the educa-

SEE COMMITTEE A5

MERRIMACK COUNTY

# Nursing home expansion approved

Project will convert Gerrish Manor into memory care unit, add 86 assisted-living beds

By RACHEL WACHMAN  
Concord Monitor

The Merrimack County Delegation voted on Friday to approve a \$47.5 million project to expand the Merrimack County Nursing Home by renovating the McLeod Building in Boscaawen.

The project will add 86 assisted living beds and convert the 33 beds in the current assisted living wing, known as Gerrish Manor, into a memory care unit.

The McLeod Building houses the

SEE EXPANSION A6



6 15579 00001 8

## HOLIDAY GIVING: Salvation Army hopeful to reach \$60,000 goal



GEOFF FORESTER photos / For the Monitor

Norm Chagnon Jr. holds the Salvation Army kettle for a contributor outside Sam's Club in Concord on Tuesday morning.

# Ringling with gratitude

By JONATHAN VAN FLEET  
Concord Monitor

Norman Chagnon Jr. bundled up against the cold on Sheep Davis Road, wearing a crimson Salvation Army hat, scarf and vest that covered his black leather coat.

As anyone approached the telltale Red Kettle, he rang a silver bell clutched in his orange-gloved hand.

"I like giving back to the community, plus to the people," he said, his blue eyes glinting like the silver cross around his neck.

Chagnon is one of the regular bell ringers who stands outside this time of year collecting donations to help the charitable organization meet its fundraising goals.

This year, that amount is \$60,000. With eight days to go before Christ-



SEE GIVING A5

Chagnon Jr. has been a bell ringer for the past six years and credits the Salvation Army with helping him find a place to live after being homeless.



FRIENDLY AS CAN BE SINCE 1983

# ROWELL'S

PLUMBING • DRAINS • HEATING • AIR

603-934-4145  
ROWELLSERVICES.COM

## Thank you Concord

for another great year. We appreciate your continued support, and can't wait to see you in 2026!



Joe King's  
SHOE SHOP

Serving Concord  
Since 1951