

KANAWHA IN REVIEW

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The following Metro Kanawha-related news and feature items were among those published in recent editions of The Charleston Gazette, Charleston Daily Mail, Saturday Gazette-Mail and Sunday Gazette-Mail:

Official proposes using settlement to cover shortfall

With a budget shortfall looming in the **Nitro** Fire Department's budget, city officials proposed Tuesday, Feb. 2, using funds from the U.S. Tire Recovery settlement to pay off debts owed on a fire truck and the fire chief's vehicle.

Using the funds in the short term would free up money in the city's general fund and help pay for the city building inspector's salary, said treasurer John Young.

More than 40,000 illegally stored tires burned in the massive inferno in May 2006.

The overall settlement was for \$1.17 million. About \$475,000 of that went to lawyer fees and was used to handle the class action claims.

The awards to claimants ranged from \$68.60 to \$73.50 for people who lived in the St. Albans zone at the time of the fire. Those who lived in the **Nitro** zones were estimated to get between \$214.20 and \$291.

Young said the lack of funds stems from a personnel change. Ron King, a city firefighter, was named Nitro's building inspector. Young said officials did not fund King's salary in the city's building department budget.

"I've got a hole now that I need to fill with \$55,000," Young said.

Young emphasized the city's budget shortfall is by no means imminent. But he, along with other city officials, would rather face the problem now than wait until March or April, as the end of the fiscal year inches closer.

But council members questioned whether funds could be used from the fire settlement for such a purpose.

Councilman Craig Matthews said the funds were to be used by the fire department specifically to purchase additional equipment or replace existing equipment - not to aid its operating budget.