

State Adoption Day marked with ... what else: adoptions

Two procedures are slated to occur in Probate Court today

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CHEBOYGAN - In honor of the first Michigan Adoption Day, Cheboygan County Probate Court is scheduled to host two adoptions today.

According to Probate and Family Court Judge Robert John Butts, there are 17 children in Cheboygan who are available for adoption.

Michigan is celebrating its first Adoption Day today in accordance with National Adoption Day on Nov. 22 and National Adoption Month, said Family Independence Agency Director Nanette Bowler.

"Michigan Adoption Day takes place two days before Thanksgiving; fittingly, our theme is 'Giving thanks for families,' " she said.

Butts said that this year, two families will finalize their adoptions today.

"Adoptions are always special occasions in our court," said Butts. "We have refreshments, it is a time of happiness."

Butts explained that a special pen is used to sign the final adoption documents.

"Regardless of age, we present the children with the pen used to finalize their adoption."

He said that there have been 16 adoption petitions filed in Probate Court so far this year. In 2001, there were 20 adoption petitions filed locally and 14 in 2002, said Butts.

Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura Corrigan said that she hopes the event will draw attention not only to the adoption process, but also the number of children available for adoption.

"Our state has thousands of children in foster care as a result of child protective proceedings," said Corrigan. "Most of them hope to return to a home where abuse or neglect is not present, but many can never return home again.

"Those are the children for whom adoption is the only answer."

Michigan had 19,490 children in foster care as of late September, said Maureen Sorbet, a spokeswoman for the state Family Independence Agency. Tentative adoptive families have been found for 4,184 of the 4,584 children available for adoption, she said.

The remaining 400 children available for adoption are considered permanent state wards who will not be returned to their birth parents.

There are 34 Michigan courts participating in Michigan's Adoption Day, said Butts. Many courts are

finalizing adoptions as well as hosting informational open houses.

Butts said that the public is welcome to visit the Probate Court office for adoption information any day of the week.

Probate Court is located upstairs at the Cheboygan County Building at 870 S. Main St. Call 627-8823.