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Irrigation district marks milestone

By Jim Cornelius
News Editor

At the flip of a switch, the turbine in a new 700Kw power generating plant at Three Sisters Irrigation District's Watson Reservoir began to hum last Friday.

It was a symbolic culminating moment in a decades-long process that has put water back in Whychus Creek, improved delivery of water for local agriculture — and now is using piped water-flow to put power into the local electrical grid.

Dignitaries from Senator Jeff Merkley to Dionne Thompson, deputy commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and Margi Hoffmann, energy policy advisor to Oregon Governor Kate Brown, were on hand to mark the occasion.

Merkley noted the backdrop of the Three Sisters — almost barren of snow. And he commented on driving past Detroit Lake on his way to Sisters Country and seeing how low the water level has gotten.



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Peter West of Energy Trust (with microphone) presented a check for \$1 million to TSID manager Marc Thalacker during observances at Watson Reservoir last week.

"I've never seen it close to that," he told an assemblage of local irrigators and interested citizens. "That really frames the challenge of how we manage water."

TSID has, for many years now, been engaged in piping its irrigation ditches, which has put substantial flows back into Whychus Creek while

improving water delivery to the farmers the district serves. So far, the district has piped over 40 of its 60 miles of canals, and plans to complete the piping in the next couple of years.

TSID Manager Marc Thalacker drew a stark comparison between the severe drought of 1977 and the one

Sisters Country is experiencing right now. In 1977, Whychus Creek ran dry and farmers were receiving 10 percent of their allotted water. This year — with conditions as bad or worse — farmers received between 20 percent and 40 percent of their water,

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Woman injured by off-leash dog

By Jodi Schneider McNamee
Correspondent

It started out as a wonderful September day for retired Sisters resident Jo Reitan and her seven-year-old standard poodle, Kari. They were enjoying each other's company on one of their daily strolls down the walking path in Tollgate, with Kari on leash.

What was about to happen would change Reitan's life in a way she never would have expected.

During their walk, Reitan noticed a man, a woman and a large unleashed dog standing in a driveway around 50 feet away. Instinctively Reitan turned with Kari to walk away from the unleashed dog, just in case he might notice Kari and get distracted.

Walden visits Sisters Country

By Jim Cornelius
News Editor

Rep. Greg Walden visited Sisters last week.

The Congressman stopped at Sisters Eagle Airport to check out the engineering and energy hub it has become and to hear from local businessmen and officials about issues that concern folks in Sisters Country.

"I've been fascinated by the development of the airport here," Walden told the assemblage.

Walden made a few opening remarks that acknowledged the turmoil amongst his

party in the nation's capital as the position of Speaker of the House is up for grabs.

"There's a lot of weird stuff going on in Washington, D.C. that they don't teach you in political science, I can tell you," he said. "But we'll work our way through it."

He also noted that the House has passed on a bill to the Senate that he said would help to "better manage forests," noting that the U.S. Forest Service this year has spent 52 percent of its budget fighting wildfire.

But Walden emphasized

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ASPIRE program seeks volunteers

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Rob Merola, a senior at Sisters High School, is working with his ASPIRE mentor, Phyllis Smith, to actualize his dream of pursuing a degree that will prepare him to be a theater arts manager.

Merola loves performing, but he doesn't want to be a starving artist hoping for his big break while waiting tables. Therefore, approaching the performing arts from a business perspective is aiming Merola toward a school with strong business and theater arts departments.

That's the kind of work Aspire mentors do with students — and not just those



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Phyllis Smith discusses post-high school options with Rob Merola.

who are college-bound.

Started at SHS about 10 years ago, ASPIRE is the State of Oregon's mentoring program that matches adult volunteer mentors with students to help them meet their

education and training goals beyond high school.

Smith, who has volunteered as a mentor for nine years, is very familiar with

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