

School board taking the long view on growing enrollment

By **HERB SWETT**
Of the *Keizertimes*

The Salem-Keizer School District is thinking decades ahead.

Specific proposals are down the road, but Michael Wolfe, chief operating officer for the district, gave the School Board various projections Oct. 11, all involving population growth that is expected to be significant.

"The district is on a steady growth trajectory," he said, noting that the total enrollment of 41,464 in 2015, the most recent year in the charts he distributed, is projected to become 42,518 in 2020 43,521 in 2025, and 46,666 in 2035.

Of the six mainstream high schools in the district and the elementary and middle schools in each one's attendance area, McKay heads the enrollment list both for 2015 (9,559) and 2035 (10,370). McNary is second for 2015 at 7,031 but third in the 2035 projection at 7,655, two students behind the projection for South Salem. Sprague is in fifth place for 2015 at 5,034 and West Salem last for 2035 at 6,124.

Wolfe said the long-range facilities plan involves the key assumptions of class sizes, gymnasiums, cafeterias, libraries, and auditoriums; ongoing building needs; and capacity and core facilities. Capacity is one of the biggest issues, he said.

He noted that by 2025, assuming all portable classrooms still will be used, 105 or about 6 percent will be between 20 and 36 years old. He added that cafeterias, gyms, and libraries are too few and too small, and that nine of the elementary schools do not have cafeterias.

Under the heading of educational adequacy are educational specifications, career and technical education, science laboratories, and technology.

For safety and security, he said, development of enhanced systems is underway.

The plan includes support facilities, specifically services involving students, instruction, technology and information, transportation, and reproduction of graphics.

The next steps, Wolfe said, involve a citizens' facilities task force and a 10-year capital improvement plan, the latter required by state law.

Director Chuck Lee praised the administration's planning efforts but said the district in any

case should seek a second opinion and possibly a third opinion.

In other business, the board re-elected Rachel Dewey-Thorsett and Levi Herrera-Lopez to three-year terms on the district budget committee. Dewey-Thorsett is vice chairperson of the committee. Herrera-Lopez, also an incumbent, is a McNary graduate who as a student was senior class representative for the student body and founding president of the Multicultural Club.

Also seeking the two open positions were Charles Randy Kern and Gregg B. DeVine, both of Salem.

The board approved the annual Hands and Words Are Not for Hurting proclamation, declaring that there is no room for abuse in schools.

Six grants approved by the board totaled \$284,847, including \$3,500 from Early Learning Hub for a parenting class at Keizer Elementary School.

Personnel actions approved included four in the McNary attendance area: a less than half-time teaching contract for Irina Bakun at McNary, a temporary part-time teaching contract for Kathleen Jensen at Whiteaker Middle School, resignation of Sarah Collins as a teacher at Claggett Creek Middle School, and a requested change of status from contract full-time to contract part-time for Holly Smucker, effective learning and instructional coach at Kennedy Elementary School.

The Spotlight on Success portion of the meeting included honoring Jeanne Bridges, a retired Cummings Elementary School teacher, as Volunteer of the Month.

Orchestras perform Oct. 25

McNary High School Orchestra, under the direction of Sean Williams, will hold its fall concert Tuesday, Oct. 25 at 7 p.m. in the Ken Collins Theater.

All three string orchestras—advanced chamber ensemble, symphony strings and concert—will perform the music of JS Bach, Josef Hayden and Henry Purcell.

Advanced and intermediate orchestras at Whiteaker Middle School will also take the stage.

The concert will last a little more than one hour. Admission is free.



Helmet program could use a boost

The Keizer Traffic Safety, Bikeways and Pedestrian Committee met Thursday, Oct. 13. Here's what members discussed:

- The committee's helmet safety program is looking for donations.

At Lakepoint Community Church's Servefest event in September, representatives of the committee outfitted 30 local residents with helmets – so many that they ran out in the first two hours of the event. At the Keizer Fire District open House in early October, visitors scooped up another 20.

The program is probably the only one in area still going strong, but it needs community support, said Committee Chair Hersch Sangster.

The committee purchases helmets for about \$12 including shipping and asks those in need for a \$5 donation, which goes back into the program.

Donations can be made to the Traffic Safety Committee helmet program through the City of Keizer.

- Verda Lane Northeast residents Jim Gray and Pritam Rohila spoke to the committee about a possible speed reduction on Verda south of the Dearborn Avenue Northeast intersection. Gray said the most frequent problem times were during the morning commute. Gray and Rohila hoped to see

the speed dropped from 35 mph to 25 mph.

Sgt. Trevor Wenning of the Keizer Police Department said traffic and speed counters were set out in the area earlier in the week and the committee hopes to review the data at a later meeting to determine if there is a problem.

Any change to the speed limit would require approval by state officials.

- Resident Rhonda Rich spoke to the committee about the possibility of televising its meetings. With some of the issues that committee is hoping to tackle, she said it would be beneficial to residents to have a glimpse of the discussions.

Sangster and Kim Freeman, the committee's city council liaison said they would look into the possibility. The idea was met with enthusiasm.

- Sangster reported that there were currently no plans for a safety study on River Road North by either the Oregon Department of Transportation or City of Keizer, which means that a new study would need to be planned for in the upcoming budget cycle.

Wenning is currently collecting data about crashes and other incidents along Keizer's main thoroughfare.

"The south end of River Road is far more dangerous

for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists," Sangster said. "There's no bike lane, the right travel lane has utility hazards and sidewalks are hit-and-miss as far as quality."

Some committee members reserved judgement on the issue until Wenning presents his report, but committee member Pat Fisher said current conditions might also make it intimidating for cyclists and pedestrians, and should also be considered.

- Committee member Kathy Lincoln reported that a new bike repair station would cost about \$1,200 to \$1,500 depending on the specific amenities. The committee hopes to raise funds to purchase a new repair station and locate it within the city for public use.

Sangster said the need for such devices became evident when he attended a school event where his daughter teaches. Sangster helped out by filling bicycle tires for the school's attendees.

"Nearby gas stations charged for air pump time and we were giving it out for free. We had 175 bicycles show up," he said.

Committee members received approval from the Keizer City Council Monday, Oct. 14, to apply for a Cycle Oregon grant to cover the cost of the repair station.

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