

Falls City waits on sewer grant

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — News about whether the city of Falls City will receive a Community Development Block Grant to upgrade its sewer system hadn't come in as of Monday, but should soon.

The city applied for a \$2.5 million grant, which would cover most of the cost of the \$3.3 million improvement project. Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority took the application to the second level of review and will notify the city if the application is successful and how much it will be awarded before the end of this year.

Mayor Terry Ungricht said an income survey showing that more than 55 percent of residents on the system fall into low- or moderate-income brackets bodes well for the city's chances of getting approved.

If given the full amount, that still leaves a gap of \$800,000, half of which could be covered by a smaller grant. Given the condition of the facility and amount of money required in repairs recently, Ungricht has warned that rates will need to be increased to pay for loans to complete project.

He will recommend a rate increase in next year's budget and hopes to keep the rates around \$60 per month.

"We would be financing about \$400,000, which would add about \$10 to everyone's bill. That's the plan," Ungricht said. "I'm making every effort to keep the rates in the \$60 mark. I don't know if I'm going to be successful."

In other business, the Falls City City Council and Falls City School District board will meet to discuss funding options for the Wagner Community Library on Dec. 8 at 6 p.m.

Homeless student count holds steady

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — People who are homeless are difficult to track. They tend to be transient in nature, moving wherever they can find a roof or job.

Homeless students are no different.

The Oregon Department of Education released the homeless student count last week, showing 35 homeless students in Falls City schools; 81 in Central and 60 in Dallas.

"The number doesn't fluctuate dramatically unless we're in a huge economic downturn," said Central Superintendent Buzz Brazeau.

Central's homeless liaison Angie Aguirre said there are probably more students who are homeless, but they can fall through the cracks.

It's those students who give Brazeau the most concern.

"I'm more concerned that there may be some homeless kids that we don't know

about, kids who are maybe couch-surfing or doing other things, that don't identify themselves," he said. "If they don't identify themselves, we can't track them."

Falls City Superintendent Jack Thompson agreed.

"I would say probably the number (of homeless students) is higher, but that's how many we're able to report," he said. "We have some that we suspect, but we have to have confirmation."

School districts have various resources available to help homeless students, including extra help with homework, transportation and food.

"I have a lot of volunteers that bring me donations of school supplies, sometimes backpacks," Aguirre said. "We get money to buy them clothing or help with sports or extracurricular activities."

Aguirre said she acts like a social worker, mediating between the parent and teacher.

"A lot of parents don't

know — I don't know if they're just embarrassed to say they're homeless, I don't know — but once they know I'm here to help them out any way that I can, oh, they're so grateful," she said.

In Falls City, homeless students are offered access to showers in the gym and use of the laundry facilities, Thompson said.

"Last year, I ran into some teachers from one of our elementary schools who were down shopping for kids in their schools who were homeless," Brazeau said. "Here at the district office, we've adopted 17 students who are on (a giving) tree. People go by and grab a ticket and bring those gifts in, and we get those out to those kids."

Homelessness affects every district, Thompson said.

"It's difficult," he said. "The kids have so many battles already in their world: trying to get their homework done, get a project done for school — and then you go

home to a situation — not a conducive living situation. Getting your homework done is not going to be a top priority. That's not unique to Falls City; that's everywhere you go."

While there is no easy solution or answer to homelessness, Thompson said Falls City is particularly tough when it comes to finding a job.

"Every homeless family I have ever spoken to is not proud of it, and would love to have something different," he said. "The bottom line is it comes down to employment, being able to find that employment. Homeless people are not lazy, they've just been dealt a tough hand."

In Falls City, jobs are scarce — more so than in other Polk counties.

"People have to drive 10 miles to get to a job," Thompson said. "If I'm homeless, I can't afford a car, can't afford insurance, gas, can't get to work. We don't even have a bus that comes out here."

Polk part of case suing over sick time

Itemizer-Observer staff report

POLK COUNTY — Polk County is among nine counties suing the state over the requirement to provide paid sick leave.

The plaintiffs claim that the forcing local governments to provide paid sick time to employees without

reimbursement is a violation of the state constitution.

Gov. Kate Brown and Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian are named as defendants in the suit, which was filed in May.

Plaintiffs, which appeared in Linn County Court last week, argue that they are not

required abide by the law passed in 2015, because the state constitution doesn't require local government to spend money "for a new program or increased level of service for an existing program until the state appropriates and allocates to the local government reim-

bursement for any costs incurred to carry out the law, rule or order."

The plaintiffs claim that the sick leave law creates a new program.

The state filed a motion to dismiss. The next court date in the case is scheduled for December.

See something interesting happening in Polk County?
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Jim DeVault

Sept. 1941 – Nov. 2016

Jim DeVault, 75, of Dallas, was born in Coos County. He passed away peacefully at his home with family by his side.



Jim and Sue were married Oct. 29, 1965, and just celebrated their 51st anniversary.

He was a loving husband and father. Jim worked at Willamette Industries in Dallas for 30 years.

Jim is survived by his wife, Sue; sons, Jeff (Laurie) and Corey (Nancy); granddaughters, Brittany Lawson (Lakota) and Mckenzie DeVault, all of Dallas.

He will be greatly missed by all.

A private graveside service was held at Restlawn Funeral Home. The service was officiated by Pastor Chris Barker, of Valley Life Center.

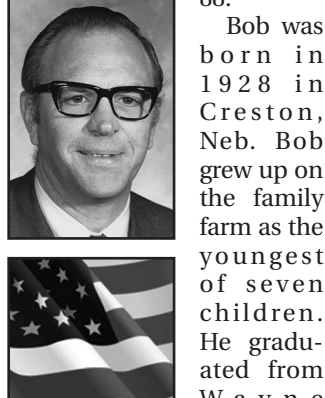
Arrangements were handled by Bollman Funeral Home.

Robert Gene Ogan

Oct. 6, 1928 – Nov. 22, 2016

Robert Gene Ogan passed

away Tuesday, Nov. 22 at his Monmouth home, surrounded by family. He was 88.



Bob was born in 1928 in Creston, Neb. Bob grew up on the family farm as the youngest of seven children. He graduated from Wayne State College in Wayne, Neb., after which he served in the Army during the Kore-

an war. After his service, Bob returned to Nebraska to earn his master's degree in education from the University of Nebraska — Omaha.

Bob married Norma Jean Thayer in 1956 in Omaha, moving shortly thereafter to Wayne to teach at the Wayne State elementary school.

Bob and Norma made the big decision to relocate to Oregon with their family when he accepted a position teaching at the Campus Elementary School at (what was then known as) the Oregon College of Education in Monmouth. Bob enjoyed a successful career teaching at Campus Elementary and Talmadge Middle School, retiring in 1990.

Bob and Norma enjoyed their life in retirement in Monmouth. He enjoyed gardening, RV camping and trips to area casinos. Bob and Norma celebrated their

60th wedding anniversary in 2016.

Bob is survived by wife Norma; daughters Lisa (Scott Reynolds), Susan, and Pam (Bruce Lathrop); son Robert (Jackie); and four grandchildren.

There will be a Celebration of Life service at St. Marks Lutheran Church in Salem, Saturday, Dec. 3, at 1 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Special Olympics Oregon: soor.org/donate; or Willamette Valley Hospice: wvh.org/donate, or to a special cause of your choice.

Farnstrom Mortuary is handling arrangements. Life story, photos and online guest book may be found on Robert's memorial website at FranstromMortuary.com.

Sara Brown

Jan. 24, 1992 – Nov. 26, 2016

Sara L. Brown-Serry, a resident of Falls City, died on Saturday, Nov. 26, in a motor vehicle accident south of Monmouth.

Sara was born on January 24, 1992, in Dallas, the daughter of Russ and Eileen Brown. Sara grew up in the country,

and developed a love for animals and the outdoors. As a child, she always looked forward to family trips to Disneyland, Sea World, Six Flags, and Knott's Berry Farm.

She loved theme parks, but she especially loved the thrill rides. Sara also enjoyed hiking, camping, hunting, skiing, horses and ATVs. She was riding her own little ATV at the dunes at a very young age, practically as soon as she could sit on the seat and reach the handlebars.

Sara lived life to the fullest, and made every moment count. Sara attended schools in Dallas through her sophomore year and graduated in 2010 from Mt. View High School in Bend.

Sudoku solution

8	6	7	3	9	2	4	5	1
9	5	4	8	1	6	3	2	7
2	3	1	4	5	7	8	6	9
1	2	3	9	7	8	5	4	6
7	4	9	2	6	5	1	3	8
5	8	6	1	3	4	9	7	2
3	7	5	6	8	9	2	1	4
6	9	2	5	4	1	7	8	3
4	1	8	7	2	3	6	9	5

Sara worked for Washington Street Steakhouse in Dallas. She oversaw catering and bookkeeping. She also had her own house cleaning business. Sara married Matt Serry on Sept. 17, 2016. Matt describes Sara as a modern-day homesteader.

Sara raised poultry, had a vegetable garden, and enjoyed working on her property. She made their meals from scratch. They rarely dined out because she loved to cook.

She canned fruits and vegetables, and even made her own laundry soap. She has a logo on her truck that says, "A country girl can survive."

She always had gifts for her nieces and nephews' birthdays and Christmas. She always had one of her nieces or nephews on her hip. Of all her loves and interests, above all came her family.

The family is very grateful to have spent Thanksgiving with her and all of us together.

She is survived by her husband, Matt Serry, father, Russ (Cindy) Brown, mother, Eileen Cardwell, sister, Virginia (Paul) Marino, brothers, Nathan (Ashley) Brown and Ben (Emily), sister, Kaylee Cardwell, grandmother, Sue Jacobs, aunts, uncles, along with nieces and nephews, and her dog, Boone.

Funeral Service will be on Saturday, Dec. 3, at 1 p.m. at the Evangelical Bible Church on 1175 SW Howe St., in Dallas. Interment will be in Dallas Cemetery.

Memorial Contributions may be made to a charity of choice or to the family in care of Dallas Mortuary Tribute Center who is caring for the family. To leave an online condolence or share a memory for the family go to www.dallastrIBUTE.com

Joanne Elise Potter

Nov. 20, 1966 – Nov. 27, 2016

Joanne Elise Potter, 50, of Falls City, died Nov. 27.

She is survived by her mother Hazel Potter; brother, Jim Potter; sister Jackie Kroecker (Mike); daughter Jennifer Scott; and four grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her father James Potter and her soulmate Joe Mott.

At Joanne's request, there will be no services. The Dallas Mortuary Tribute Center handled arrangements. To leave an online tribute: www.dallastrIBUTE.com.

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