

## City may increase parks SDC

By Sue Stafford  
Correspondent

The Parks Advisory Board heard from Patrick Davenport, community development director, that staff is considering the need to increase the parks system development charges (SDCs).

SDCs are fees paid by builders per unit built to cover certain expenses to the City created by new dwelling units. For example, with a new subdivision going in, there will be impacts on the existing sewer and water systems as well as increased use of City parks by new residents. SDCs pass the cost of necessary improvements onto the builders and thus the new homebuyers or renters, rather than requiring existing residents to pay for costs related to new developments.

The current parks SDC in Sisters is \$613 per dwelling,

by far the lowest in the major Central Oregon communities. The total SDCs for all services on a single 1,800-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bath house in Sisters run about \$10,000. Comparable SDCs in Bend are \$40,000 to \$60,000.

In some communities, like Madras, an equivalent dwelling unit basis is used in determining parks SDCs, so everyone pays, including businesses. For example, the local McDonald's may be the equivalent of six dwelling units, and would be required to pay six times the rate for a single residential dwelling unit.

In Sisters, the commercial and industrial properties pay higher property taxes so they are not required to pay the SDC.

The Parks Advisory Board voted to recommend to Sisters City Council an increase in parks SDC fees

to \$1,368, a little over double the current fee. Council will receive that recommendation and conduct a public hearing, probably in May. The proposed change also has to be forwarded to the Central Oregon Builders Association for notification of any builders working in Sisters.

At their March 3, 8 a.m. workshop, council will be reviewing the PAB's recommended Parks Master Plan (minus the SDCs) with possible adoption at the March 19, 7 p.m. Council meeting.

The PAB also began discussion on establishing a policy for selecting names for new parks. They looked at possible criteria such as the name being consistent with the town's Western theme, or in memory of a resident of local significance. They will solicit public input before finalizing the policy.

## Child seat safety program on tap

The Sisters-Camp Sherman RFPD was awarded a reimbursement-based grant through the Oregon Department of Transportation to provide child passenger seat services to the community. The grant provides up to \$1,200 over the next 10 months to assist in purchasing supplies needed to conduct a child safety seat program and requires an in-kind match from the District of 25 percent. This match will be met by volunteers conducting child safety seat checks for the community throughout the year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of preventable deaths and injuries to children in the United States. Correctly used, child safety seats can reduce the risk of

death by as much as 71 percent. Most car seats are either installed incorrectly, or do not fit the child properly. Providing education to caregivers about how to properly buckle their children is a simple and highly effective way to make a difference.

The next car seat checkup event will be held on Saturday, March 5, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Sisters fire station, located at 301 S. Elm St. in Sisters. Seats will be checked by nationally certified car seat technicians for proper installation and recall information. Caregivers will then be assisted in installing their child's seat properly.

For more information, contact Heather Miller, Sisters-Camp Sherman fire district volunteer at 541-729-5791.

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