

SCHOOL BOND:
Voters will decide
in May 17 election

Continued from page 1

Hedrick and board vice chair Jeff Smith said that enhancing safety and security is a critical action in today's climate, where violent intruders are a threat.

"It's something we have to do," Hedrick said.

The \$2.76 million allocated through the proposed bond funding would allow reconfiguring school entrances to provide improved access control and provide for security devices.

"Technology allows us to lock classroom doors in the event of an intruder," Smith said.

Roof repair at Sisters High School would be covered within the \$2.7 million allocated for site improvements. However, the district is no longer planning on replacing the roof, which has posed problems almost since the high school was opened 12 years ago.

Taxpayer frustration with the notion of replacing a 12-year-old roof is considered a key reason that voters rejected a \$14.5 million bond request in November 2014.

"The roof, we think now, can be repaired rather than replaced," Hedrick said.

Instead of a \$1.3 million estimate cost to replace the roof, the district has allocated \$375,000 for repair.

"We have worked with subcontractors to make repairs

on the roof, and those fixes have been successful," Smith told *The Nugget*.

He said the board believes they can extend the life of the existing roof another eight to 12 years.

"The roof was a huge controversy," Hedrick said. "We don't want the roof to be the cause of a bond issue failing."

Funds allocated for site improvements will take care of deferred maintenance and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance requirements.

ADA requirements will also drive some of the work on athletic facilities. Reed Stadium is not currently ADA compliant, and the stands have been deemed a problem for people with mobility issues. The track has been rendered unusable.

"We have to replace the track," Hedrick said. "It's not usable. The stadium is not ADA compliant."

Some \$2.5 million has been allocated in the bond for Reed Stadium repairs and upgrades. Another \$481,250 has been called out for a new baseball field and \$357,500 for tennis courts. The courts would also be lined for pickleball and open for community use, Hedrick noted.

There is no money allocated for technology purchases, which was another sticking point for taxpayers in the failed \$14.5 million bond election of 2014.

The district is allocating funds from the proposed bond to pay off \$1,270,000

remaining to be paid on the district's full faith and credit obligations. The district obligated itself to the tune of \$2.1 million in March of 2007 to fund replacement of the elementary school roof and other facilities needs. At the time the FF&C obligations were incurred, enrollment in Sisters schools was strong and staff and school board believed the district could readily sustain payments.

"The roof, we think now, can be repaired rather than replaced."
— Don Hedrick

When the Great Recession hit and enrollment (which is the basis for the allocation of state school funding) plummeted, the FF&C obligations became a significant burden, costing the district \$240,000 per year — money that could not go to funding teachers.

"We were looking at growing revenue on an annual basis — then the world changed," Smith said.

By paying off that debt, the district would free up the payment dollars for the classroom.

Hedrick and Smith say that, while the reduced bond request will not cover all of the needs of the district, it will cover critical needs. They note that the district plans to host at least two public information presentations between now and the election.

GOVERNOR: Programs
are example of
STEAM curriculum

Continued from page 1

and excitement."

Woodshop teacher Tony Cosby noted that the class can put a student in the alternative education program to work right next to "a kid who's going to med school."

Brown asked student Rory Petterson to talk about his work. Petterson showed her how he designed a customized headstock for his guitar on the computer, then showed off his work-in-progress.

"What do you like about this work?" Gov. Brown asked.

"Doing something like this on the computer and bringing it out into the real world," Petterson replied. "I think this has opened me up to so many experiences and so many opportunities — it led me toward the engineering side."

Gov. Brown also visited Sisters High School's Flight Sciences Program, co-sponsored by the school district, ENERGYneering Solutions, and Sisters Science Club. The main purpose of the class is to introduce students to the science and wonder of flight, and prepare them to take the FAA Private Pilot written exam.

Coursework for this class is mostly computer-based. Volunteer pilots serve as mentors and coaches. Students

also have opportunities for flight.

The greenhouse that is under construction at Sisters High School in conjunction with Sisters Science Club and Sisters Kiwanis was also on the tour. That facility provides not only educational opportunities in agricultural sciences, but also provides fresh food for students.

"I think this has opened me up to so many experiences and so many opportunities — it led me toward the engineering side."
— Rory Petterson

The programs that continue to thrive in Sisters despite enrollment struggles and tight budgets reflect a high degree of community engagement from local non-profits and individuals. Such programs serve as a model for initiatives that could be applied across Oregon — which is what sparked Brown's interest.

And Governor Brown recognized the key element that makes such innovations feasible: "Thanks to the volunteers," she said. "This program wouldn't be happening with out them, right?"

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