

County site in running for geothermal lab

BEND (AP) — The U.S. Department of Energy is considering a site in Oregon's Deschutes County for a national geothermal research lab.

The land near Newberry Volcano is leased by Seattle-based geothermal firm AltaRock Energy Inc., which performs testing there. It's one of several locations under consideration for the proposed Frontier Observatory for Research in Geothermal Energy.

"We feel pretty confident," AltaRock Spokesman David Stowe told *The Bulletin*. But he acknowledged that "the competition is pretty stiff," with sites in Idaho, Nevada, California and Utah still in the running.

Supporters of the Newberry site say the facility would bring temporary construction jobs, academic opportunities and an economic boost for local communities.

The DOE lab would serve as a research site for scientists and engineers to develop and test new technologies

for harnessing geothermal energy. Researchers believe that tapping into up to 2 percent of the geothermal energy potential in the West could power the nation many times over.

Geothermal technology wouldn't contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and could operate consistently, unlike intermittent solar and wind-powered resources.

Three potential lab sites will advance to the next round and split about \$30 million in Energy Department funding for planning and permitting before the DOE chooses a final site.

The department plans to spend at least five years implementing the lab. Stowe said researchers hope to perfect enhanced geothermal techniques and make them more efficient by that time.

AltaRock has already conducted enhanced geothermal testing at the Newberry site and partners say they have the only site on the side of an active volcano.

City snapshots

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

- Tickets are now on sale for the 19th annual Quilts in the Garden home and garden tour, presented by the Sisters Garden Club on Thursday, July 7, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The \$15 tickets are available at the Chamber of Commerce office and The Gallimaufry, and provide admittance to five local gardens and several homes. Visit www.sistersgardclub.com for information.

- Three Sisters City Council positions will be open for election in November. To qualify for the ballot, perfected petitions must be submitted by August 30, 2016. Election materials are available at City Hall. Candidates must live within the city limits of Sisters.

- Citizens4Community will be sponsoring a public presentation by Sharon Ellison on her model of Powerful Non-Defensive Communication on Tuesday, July 12. She will discuss the value of inclusive, collaborative communication,

where there are no winners or losers. Check out her website for more information on her work, www.pndc.com. See next week's *Nugget* for details.

- The Community Development Department has started using new and improved signs to advertise public hearings. The brand new sign used at the Village at Cold Springs was vandalized, kicked in or smashed by a rock. The notice got attention but not the desired kind. This is a frustration for the CDD when they are trying to find new and better ways to keep the public informed about upcoming hearings.

- There will be a special Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday, June 29, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, to continue the public hearing regarding Hayden Homes' request for a modification to their 2005 Master Plan for Village at Cold Springs. They are asking to divide their 43-acre parcel of land into two separate developments, to allow for a new Master Plan application for

the remaining 18.37 acres of undeveloped land (*see story, page 1*).

- Sisters High School student Alena Norris is creating an interactive black-and-white poster of the civility tenets for the Sisters Country Civility Project, as well as mini-decals that can be placed on cell phones, tablets, or any other surface as a reminder to "speak your peace." The poster will be one that people can color themselves.

- In a presentation to the City Council, Jim Long, Bend's director of affordable housing, explained what Bend is doing to encourage builders to build affordable housing. One interesting point he made was that federal housing programs are directed toward cities of over 50,000 residents. That makes Bend eligible for them but none of the other smaller Central Oregon cities, including Sisters. They are also heavily weighted toward the age of housing, which makes the older urban eastern U.S. cities more likely to receive funding.

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