

Nonprofit seeks to honor 'climate champions'

Early adopters have always led the way to new and improved ways of living.

Already, there are many businesses, organizations, and individuals who have learned that conservation, energy efficiency, clean energy and transportation, and thoughtful buying decisions all contribute to increased value for themselves and the community.

350Deschutes, a local nonprofit organization, seeks to honor these champions at their upcoming conference, *Climate Change: Solutions & Opportunities*, on October 3. They seek nominations, either individuals or entities, from Central Oregon. Suggested names of nominees may be sent to actnowforclimate@gmail.com, along with 35 words as to why they are being nominated. Nominations close August 31.

Three Sisters Irrigation District is among the current nominees for their efforts in water and energy conservation.

Climate champions will be featured on the 350deschutes.org website.

Some of the characteristics of climate champions:

- Installation of solar or renewable energy that decreases cost while also contributing to clean air and the reduction of harmful emissions from fossil fuels. This may be a netzero facility or home whose energy use equals its energy savings.

- Buying decisions that consider costs, and reuse of materials in order to lower the environmental impact of waste and transportation.

- Installation of energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and/or heating/cooling, that reduce energy use and lower costs.

- Getting around through biking, electric or fuel-efficient vehicles, mass transit, or walking to help alleviate traffic congestion while reducing pollution and lowering harmful carbon emissions. Using electric tractors or other alternative-fuel vehicles within the business.

- Integration of sustainable practices into their business model to reduce waste, decrease cost and maintenance, while helping the bottom line.

- Lifestyle decisions that may include a diet of more plant-based foods, rather than meat.

"The clean economy offers value to individuals, businesses, and communities," said Diane Hodiak, executive director of 350Deschutes. "These early adopters have discovered how to integrate these choices, or some of these choices, into their everyday life. You don't have to believe in climate change to experience the benefits. You only have to believe that there are better choices that lead to healthier and wealthier communities."

FRYE: Mayor is moving outside Sisters city limits

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of room tax revenues from 33 percent to 50 percent and increased the rate to 9.9 percent. Frye lobbied lodging property owners to support the increase and was gratified by the response.

"Probably 90 percent of them supported it, which was really impressive," he said. "The Chamber now has money to actually do things (particularly in marketing the community across the region)."

He also cited the City's assistance in the refurbishing of the tennis and basketball courts at Sisters Elementary School as a gratifying accomplishment.

"Every time I drive by and see kids playing, a dad playing basketball with their kids, it feels good," he said.

Housing remains a critical issue that the Council and City staff will have to address, Frye told *The Nugget*. And Sisters is far from alone in having to grapple with a tight housing market, particularly for rentals, and with affordability for the local work force.

"All the cities in the region are getting crushed with affordable housing right now," he said. "It's number one."

He noted that the City is meeting this month with a developer who is planning to build apartments in Sisters.

Another challenge for the City is hiring a new senior

planner and strengthening the planning department, especially as quick growth returns to the community. Frye notes that the planning department is critical, and virtually all of the City's potential liabilities come from that arena. He hopes the City can hire a capable planner with Oregon experience.

Frye presided over a stressful, months-long process earlier this year that ultimately led to the City's separation with City Manager Andrew Gorayeb over behavior that violated the City's "encouraged conduct" but did not amount to offenses worthy of termination for cause. Gorayeb resigned with a severance package amounting to slightly under \$114,000 and the City was compelled to release a poorly redacted investigator's report that revealed individual staff members and their comments to the investigator.

Frye was cautious about discussing the investigation, but he acknowledged, "I think there's elements of that that we'd do differently" if given the chance.

Looking forward, he said that the City Council needs to improve its direction of the city manager.

"We need to look at our employee manual and some language to see if it was adequate so that we don't have to go through anything like this again," he said.

He also said that the Council needs to create a more effective and meaningful review process for the city manager, noting that a review of the city manager often also

amounts to a self-review of the Council.

"It's so symbiotic," he said. "You're not just reviewing (the city manager) you're kind of reviewing yourself. You have to give adequate feedback... You need five councilors who are willing to do that and coach a city manager... Being able to manage people effectively is important."

Just getting five councilors elected is a challenge at the moment. As of Monday, only two candidates had filed for three open positions for the November election.

Frye said that, with interim leadership from City Manager Rick Allen, the City has reduced the workload and number of meetings expected of a councilor. The level of time commitment is a significant factor for councilors, Frye acknowledged. And the tumult that has plagued the Council for several years has also had an effect on people's willingness to serve.

Frye said he believes that as the Council stabilizes and focuses on doing what the people want and being transparent, there will be less conflict and "people won't be as scared to get into the pool."

As for his own future, Frye said, "I think we are all called to serve in some fashion... I will continue to serve. I don't know what that will look like right now."

For the moment, Frye will focus on his business, the General Store at Black Butte Ranch — and a new passion.

"I bought a violin," he said. "I'm going to learn to play the violin in my new spare time."

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