

## FLOODING: Much depends on how much rain comes down

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may avail themselves of free sandbags, and the sand to fill them, at the City Hall parking lot, in the southeast corner facing Sisters Elementary School.

There is also the potential for urban flooding and ponding throughout town as the large quantity of snow begins to melt. The inevitable slush could also make for difficult driving.

According to Public Works Director Paul Bertagna, the county emergency operations team has met to identify potential trouble spots and Whychus Creek is at the top of the list. The creek is frozen over in many spots, with snow on top of the ice. Too much warming and rain, too quickly, causes the ice to break into large chunks, which run swiftly downstream, tearing up the creek bank, uprooting trees, and carrying other debris.

Fortunately, a warm Chinook wind, bringing much warmer temperatures, was not in the forecast for this week. However, to be prepared for any eventuality, the City has a hazard mitigation plan already in place with outside contractors on alert should they be needed.

Snow remaining on roofs will become heavier with the rainfall. Ice dams and frozen downspouts could hinder runoff from roofs. Many Sisters residents have already experienced interior damage due to roof leaks, and more are sure to come.

The entire City Public Works staff has been doing yeoman's duty through all of the inclement weather, which produced a storm total of 60 inches of snow, more than in 1982 and 1992. We missed the 1972 record by only six

inches.

Staff has battled severe temperatures, deep snow, and chilling wind, working non-stop since Thursday, January 5. This snow hit all of Central Oregon, rather than just parts of Deschutes, Jefferson, and/or Crook counties, which is the more common scenario. This time the weather reports were 100 percent accurate.

Bertagna acknowledged that everyone is tiring of the challenges created by the snow. As snow-plowing slowed down, loaders and backhoes were able to follow behind the plows and clear driveways of the berms created by the plows. Bertagna asked for patience on the part of the citizens as staff does their best to provide timely service.

The large piles of snow throughout town that are the result of street and sidewalk clearing were being hauled away to land near the sewer treatment plant, the red dirt triangle on the east end of town where Highways 126 and 20 join, and the old ODOT property near the Sisters Ranger Station at the west end of town. There is limited space in town for disposing of the snow.

Snow removal is a budget-line item in the street fund. For fiscal year 2016/17, the amount budgeted for snow removal is \$10,000. As of last Thursday, January 12, the amount payable was \$9,500. With two nights of utilizing independent contractors to help with snow removal, the City expects to be approximately \$20,000 over budget on the street fund for snow removal, based on the weather impacts to date.

"The City will utilize our street fund operating contingency for the additional requirements so the financial impact is a reclassification of expenses, not an addition to appropriations," said Joe O'Neill, City finance officer.

"From a personnel



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Whychus Creek is beautiful – and a potential flooding threat.

standpoint, we have been incurring some overtime through these conditions; however, the additional hours come at a minimal impact to our overall personnel services budget. Staff does a great job of being flexible and arranging their schedules so some staff work nights removing snow and sleep during the day. Also, some employees elect to receive comp time for extra hours worked instead of getting paid overtime," said O'Neill.

O'Neill went on to praise the Public Works employees who "have been all-stars throughout these winter conditions. Not only have they been responsible for weather mitigation; they also have to maintain City services and facilities just as they do the rest of the year."

There was no major facility damage to any City property due to the weather conditions. The existing snowplows, however, have reached legacy status, resulting in numerous breakdowns. To minimize the exposure of these breakdowns and make snow removal more efficient and effective, City Council approved the procurement of two snowplows that will be attached to City-owned pickup trucks.

Bertagna reported to City Council at their last meeting

that the critical infrastructure like City wells, pump stations, and fire hydrants all survived the winter onslaught. As City water meters were being uncovered, only one was found to be frozen. He said that homeowners associations and private citizens were helping with tasks like uncovering fire hydrants on their property.

"This has been the kind of event where the whole community pulls together," said Bertagna.

As most everyone is aware, Bertagna confirmed that many roofs around the city are leaking due to ice dams and snow load. Construction completed from the early 1990s on, had to meet the City code of a 35-pound snow rating. On the news lately they have mentioned a 25-pound rating, but that is for Bend.

Bertagna is recommending that even if there currently is no problem with a roof, homeowners should contact a roofing contractor now to be put on their waiting list. If it turns out no problem develops, the appointment can be cancelled. If a problem does develop, the homeowner is already on the waiting list. If a serious safety issue arises, Bertagna said to call 911 and the City Public Works after-hours emergency number 541-480-7634.

## MAYOR: Ryan will preside over council meetings

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Intergovernmental Council (COIC) and the Central Oregon Cities Organization (COCO).

Blum will continue her position on the Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (COACT). David Asson will continue as the representative to Economic Development of Oregon (EDCO), where he also serves on the executive committee. Nancy Connolly will continue on Sisters Economic Development Advisory Board (the local EDCO program).

Richard Esterman will be available to fill in for other Councilors when they are unable to attend a meeting. He will also attend a variety of the meetings to familiarize himself with their functions and duties. The Councilors commit to attend the meetings and report information back to the full Council and City staff.

The City of Sisters will be holding public forums at City Hall on Wednesday, January 25, 4 to 5 p.m. and again at 6 to 7 p.m. regarding the hiring of a new city manager. Interested citizens will have an opportunity to provide comment and input to the recruiting firm concerning what characteristics and abilities they would like the new city manager to possess. Those unable to attend either session may send comments to [jeff@jensen-strategies.com](mailto:jeff@jensen-strategies.com) by 5 p.m. on January 27. For more information about the hearing contact City Recorder Kerry Prosser at 541-323-5213.

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### Sisters Shootout Champions...



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Sisters 7th- and 8th-grade squad came out on top. From left to right: Ricky Huffman, Jacob Polachek, Griffin Gardner, Ryker Staudenmaier, Noah Pittman, Nate Weber, Hayden Sharp, Garrett Vohs, Kaleb Hartman, Max Palanuk, Dillon Tucker and Coach Jason Huber.



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