

CITY: New manager search is getting underway

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the current city manager, and the consultant will conduct the semi-finalist interviews the week of April 24. Background and reference checks will be conducted on the finalists.

During the week of May 22, the City will host finalist receptions — one for City staff and one for the general public. Final interviews will be conducted by three panels: the Sisters City Council; active and retired local government administrators; and key community members. After all interviews and the receptions are completed, the City Council will convene to review all the findings and recommendations from the groups and reach a decision. The plan is to have the new manager in place by July 1.

• With the adoption of Ordinance 474, the City Council changed its regular meeting days from the second and fourth Thursday of each month to the second and fourth Wednesdays. For the month of March, the first Council meeting will still be on the second Thursday, March 9, and the new schedule will begin with the fourth Wednesday, March 22. After that, the Wednesday schedule will be followed. The change was made to reduce the conflicts with other Central Oregon and Deschutes County meetings attended by Sisters councilors.

• In early April, a large crane will be used to put the new Creekside Campground restroom in place. The building is delivered by truck, all prefabricated, from the manufacturer. Plumbing will be hooked up and the combination restroom/shower building should be open to the public by May 1.

• Over the next several years, there are 72 affordable-housing units slated for Sisters: 17 Habitat for Humanity single-family residential (SFR) homes (two already occupied and others under construction); seven SFR homes in Skygate (three already constructed); and 48 one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments coming online in spring 2018. Each of those projects represents a considerable financial investment on the part of the City, which has covered a variety of systems development charges as well as providing \$250,000 cash for the apartment complex. Last year's City Council had as one of its primary goals to encourage more affordable housing for Sisters and they made good on that promise. A portion of the increase in the transient room tax will

be dedicated to affordable housing.

• The Transportation System Plan (TSP) update is currently underway, with a citizen committee studying possible refinements in the current plan. They will also explore options for fixing/improving the Locust/Highway 20 intersection and out to the eastern city limits.

• The comprehensive study of the City's current sewer and water rate structures by an independent firm is underway. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations will be made regarding residential and commercial rates for both services as well as planning for future repair and expansion of the systems. The sewer went online in 2000, and the rate established at that time has not changed.

• In recognition of his being named the Citizen of the Year at the recent Chamber of Commerce dinner, Public Works Director Paul Bertagna was presented with a small statuette for the dashboard of his City truck by the City Council, who wanted to acknowledge his recent award.

• Patrick Davenport, community development director, reported at the joint City Council/County Commission meeting that he expects approximately 100 single-family residences to be constructed in 2017. He also reported that the City's arrangement with the Deschutes County building department is going well as everyone learns new things and the digital process is refined. The County permit tech is at Sisters City Hall weekly to accept permit applications, and plans are

delivered from the City to the County offices for review. Davenport applauded the high level of professionalism by County staff.

• The Sisters Ranger District requested a letter of support from the Parks Advisory Board for their proposal to the Recreational Trails Program to relocate the Peterson Ridge trailhead. It will be moved 800 feet outside the city limits on County Road 26 and the trailhead on Tye in the Buck Run neighborhood will be closed, bouldering the access from Tye and removing the kiosk. The new trailhead will not include a toilet, as the new restroom at Village Green Park is only a quarter-of-a-mile away. The new trailhead will provide parking and a kiosk. At some future date, a toilet might be added at the Whychus Creek overlook parking lot, which currently has a port-a-potty.

• On July 1, charges at all landfills will be increased \$5 per ton, in order to generate funds for the future purchase of a new Deschutes County landfill site or to find a new method of processing the solid waste. The increase is estimated to generate \$750,000 per year. Over the past five years, there has been a 41 percent decrease in the tonnage flow to the landfill, which has impacted future plans. The \$5 increase to the haulers will probably be reflected in increases of 50 to 75 cents per month for garbage pickup. For loads taken to the landfills, there will probably be a \$1 increase from \$11 to \$12 per load. To impose the increase to monthly bills, haulers will have to seek approval of the City.

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Indictment handed up in bonfire-related crash

Last week a Deschutes County Grand Jury returned an indictment charging Shawn William Seagraves Hall with injuring four people in a car crash that occurred on August 13.

Seagraves Hall, a 24-year-old resident of Redmond, was charged with one count of assault in the second degree, three counts of assault in the third degree, four counts of recklessly endangering with a motor vehicle, one count of reckless driving, and one count of driving under the influence of intoxicants.

According to the Deschutes County District Attorney's Office, Hall and friends were at a bonfire party in east Deschutes County. Hall allegedly drank alcohol then drove away from the party with four passengers. He was traveling on the Powell Butte Highway

and at the T-intersection with Highway 20 his vehicle crossed over Highway 20 and crashed. Hall's four passengers were injured.

"We have a bonfire party culture in our local youth community that has to end," said Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel. "We need to impress upon our kids that driving 20 miles out of town to drink in the middle of nowhere puts them and their friends at risk of injury and death."

Bail was set by the court at \$50,000. Seagraves Hall posted security and is thus out of custody during the pendency of this case. The DA's office emphasized that he is presumed innocent and has the opportunity to contest these allegations starting at his next court hearing on April 10.

Paying Off Debts or Investing?

If you're just starting out in your career, you will need to be prepared to face some financial challenges along the way — but here's one that's not unpleasant: choosing what to do with some extra disposable income. When this happens, what should you do with the money? Your decisions could make a real difference in your ability to achieve your important financial goals.

Under what circumstances might you receive some "found" money? You could get a year-end bonus from your employer, or a sizable tax refund, or even an inheritance. However the money comes to you, don't let it "slip through your fingers." Instead, consider these two moves: investing the money or using it to pay off debts.

Which of these choices should you pick? There's no one "right" answer, as everyone's situation is different. But here are a few general considerations:

Distinguish between "good" and "bad" debt.

Not all types of debt are created equal. Your mortgage, for example, is probably a "good" form of debt. You're using the loan for a valid purpose — i.e., living in your house — and you likely get a hefty tax deduction for the interest you pay. On the other hand, nondeductible consumer debt that carries a high interest rate might be considered "bad" debt — and this is the debt you might want to reduce or eliminate when you receive some extra money. By doing so, you can free up money to save and invest for retirement or other goals.

Compare making extra mortgage payments vs. investing.

Many of us get some psychological benefits by making extra house payments. Yet, when you do have some extra money, putting it toward your house may not be the best move. For one thing, as mentioned above, your mortgage can be considered a "good" type of debt, so you may not need to rush to pay it off. And from an investment standpoint, your home is somewhat "illiquid" — it's not always easy to get money out of it. If you put your extra money into traditional investments, such as stocks and bonds, you may increase your growth potential, and you may gain an income stream through interest payments and dividends.

Consider tax advantages of investing.

Apart from your mortgage, your other debts likely won't provide you with any tax benefits. But you can get tax advantages by putting money into certain types of investment vehicles, such as a traditional or Roth IRA. When you invest in a traditional IRA, your contributions may be deductible, depending on your income, and your money grows on a tax-deferred basis. (Keep in mind that taxes will be due upon withdrawals, and any withdrawals you make before you reach 59½ may be subject to a 10% IRS penalty.) Roth IRA contributions are not deductible, but your earnings are distributed tax-free, provided you don't take withdrawals until you reach 59½ and you've had your account at least five years.

Clearly, you've got some things to ponder when choosing whether to use "extra" money to pay off debts or invest. Of course, it's not always an "either-or" situation; you may be able to tackle some debts and still invest for the future. In any case, use this money wisely — you weren't necessarily counting on it, but you can make it count for you.

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