

Bend group hears suggestions to lower rents

BEND (AP) — A panel looking at ways to make Bend more affordable has heard ideas ranging from encouraging the building of smaller homes, removing barriers for new construction and discouraging tourism.

The Bulletin reports that the city’s affordable housing advisory committee held a public hearing Wednesday for residents to discuss causes and solutions to rent burden, the term for spending more than 30 percent of income on housing costs each month. One-quarter of Bend residents are considered severely rent burdened, which means they spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing.

One-time Bend City Council candidate Wade Fagen, who owns a tree-removal company, said tourism is to blame for Bend’s housing crisis. Small houses and apartments built over garages aren’t the answer, he said, but banning short-term rentals could help.

RESCUE: Family of four was in upside-down vehicle in river

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to feel slick.

Within a couple of turns of the highway, he came upon tracks that portended no good. A vehicle had lost control on the roadway and gone off the road.

“It was pretty obvious to me what had happened,” Johnson told *The Nugget*.

Johnson has seen some very bad wrecks in the year he’s been crossing the pass in his commute, and that was on his mind as he stopped to investigate.

“I wasn’t sure what I was walking up on, honestly,” he said.

But he never hesitated to act.

“I guess it was, if I don’t stop, who’s going to?” he said.

As he looked down over the shallow embankment to the North Santiam River, he saw four wheels in the air. The vehicle had flipped and was upside down in the frigid water. It turned out that there were four people inside.

“I think the daughter was hanging onto a limb and was halfway out the door,” he

recalled.

An avid outdoorsman, Johnson was familiar with wading into running waters, and he immediately waded out to help.

“Their truck had knocked down a five-inch diameter tree, and it was laying next to the vehicle in the river, so I wedged my foot/thigh into it, (and) grabbed her hand. As if [sic] she was rescued, she went completely limp (and) I dragged/skipped her down river, (and) across to the bank,” Johnson reported in his email. “I proceeded to help each person out of the vehicle. The brother next, the mother who was in total shock (and) wouldn’t cooperate without me grabbing her (and) telling her I was going to ‘drag her to the bank, one way or the other!,’ and then finally the father.”

Remarkably, there were no serious injuries. Another passerby had stopped by then, and helped the family get warm, as they were threatened by hypothermia. The truck was eventually towed out of the streambed.

Johnson continued over the mountains to Sisters, where The Lodge project is on track for completion and a targeted February opening.

“We’re getting down to the end of it now, so I am



PHOTO PROVIDED

Jeremiah Johnson is an outdoorsman, and wading out to help a trapped family was a natural act for him.

making the commute more frequently,” he said.

And, he hopes, more uneventfully from now on.

Johnson is glad he could help and said that stopping and acting just seemed like the right and natural thing to do.

“I have friends who are cops, firefighters,” he told

The Nugget. “They’d have done exactly the same thing.”

Reflecting on the event in his email, he noted, “All of this to say, that I am glad it happened the way it did (and) that the ‘best case scenario’ occurred. My hope is that if I ever end up in a similar position, I hope someone stops for me!”

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