

Commentary... City of Sisters bulletin

By Cory Misley
City Manager

The City of Sisters recently launched a survey to all business license holders based within the City. The goal is to gather firsthand feedback on the City's public services, infrastructure, and tourism, and begin the process of working towards a collaborative, long-term tourism strategic plan.

This is not the first time surveys have been used to shape policy, project, and program decisions. Most recently, the public safety survey conducted in August 2019 helped to guide the renegotiated law enforcement contract that is currently being implemented.

The year prior, the business survey from 2018 provided many insights regarding City services and potential adjustments to downtown. Since then, the City has updated its public-event policies, created a program to support affordable-housing construction, tracked the plastic bag ban adopted at the state level, and continued to invest in making our everyday services including landscaping, streets, and parks maintenance consistently excellent (as reported in that survey). One question from that business survey asked whether the City should solely perform snow removal on sidewalks in the downtown commercial core. In years past individual businesses have had to do so and take time away from their work to coordinate independently with contractors. The question in that survey was phrased around the creation of a new fee to cover the cost and responses were mixed — opposed to a new fee and/or wanting additional details of the fee amount and service level.

Across all our departments, the City works to find effective investments that provide several community benefits at once. Beginning this year, the

City will contract to have snow (during significant snow events) cleared on sidewalks in the downtown core. The City competitively bid this contract and we will monitor its initial implementation as winter quickly approaches. We need clear, safe sidewalks to enable and encourage walkability and mobility for residents throughout the winter months.

In 2019, partnering with Age Friendly Sisters Country, Sisters was recognized by the World Health Organization as an age-friendly community and city. Furthermore, that same walkability and mobility benefits local businesses by providing a better environment for visitors to eat, shop, and extend their stay. In 2019, the City as a lead partner adopted the Sisters Country Vision that includes a strategy to develop Sisters as more of a four-season tourism and visitor destination.

These objectives, among many others, are important ways the City maintains commitments with and to the community. Bringing together and overarching so much of what the City does, and how, is the Comprehensive Plan, and the City is currently in the beginning stages of a complete update to that document. Regarding the Comprehensive Plan update, please visit www.sisters2040.com to learn more. If you'd like to stay up to date on City projects and services, please visit our website at www.ci.sisters.or.us and reach out to us with any questions or comments.



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The Happy Girls Half Marathon went off as planned on Saturday, November 7, in chilly conditions and with COVID-19 protocols in place.

Adult at SMS tests COVID-positive

One of the adult personnel at Sisters Middle School has tested positive for COVID-19, according to a message from Superintendent Curt Scholl.

“Through contact-tracing protocol, we have found that there were no connections to any students,” he reported.

School announced that, “With some staff already in quarantine, staff that were already scheduled to be out, and the increasing cases in Deschutes County, we will be suspending limited in-person instruction at Sisters Middle School at this time. We still have a target of November 30 to bring our fifth grade back and feel that this break from

limited in-person instruction will help us meet that target.”


The state has shifted the metrics by which some students will be allowed to return to class. That shift comes at the same time that cases are spiking, both across Oregon and in Deschutes County.

Scholl told parents and community members, “I would reiterate, we need all Deschutes County citizens to be leaders when it comes to the COVID protocols. These changing metrics do not diminish our continued need for vigilance around fighting the spread of this virus. For the sake of our students, our vulnerable populations, and

everyone, please continue to follow the physical-distancing, hand-washing and mask-wearing protocols that have been put in place to stop the spread of this virus. Even with the new metrics, continued spikes in Deschutes County will limit our ability to serve our students.”

St. Charles Hospital System reports that, as of Monday morning, November 9, there are 15 hospitalized COVID-19 patients. Four of those COVID-19 patients are in the ICU and two are on a ventilator.

St. Charles has 24 ICU beds in Bend and six in Redmond for a total of 30 throughout the health system.



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