

Rain complicates sewer line relocation

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Mother Nature was not cooperating last Friday morning on the Locust Street sewer line relocation project. She sent much-needed rain to our parched area, but it added significantly to the water in Whychus Creek being redirected through a five-foot-wide culvert under the Locust Street bridge.

Early Friday morning a monitoring station above Sisters recorded a rate of flow in Whychus Creek of 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) and later in the morning it had increased to 55 cfs.

A crew from Robinson & Owen Heavy Construction was working to divert water from upstream behind sandbags through the culvert to the creek below the bridge, to keep the section of creek bed dry where the trench for the new sewer line needs to be dug. The digging will go across the creek bed under the culvert.

River Design from Corvallis was on hand to salvage any fish in the designated area, to be moved downstream. That was accomplished by conducting



PHOTO BY STAFFORD

Work crews placed a culvert during a project to relocate the sewer line at the Locust Street Bridge over Whychus Creek. The old line is exposed and vulnerable to damage.

an electric current through the water to stun any fish so they could be collected. The turbidity of the water made for better conduction but made it more difficult to see any stunned fish, which rolled over and floated to the surface. The River Design people reported only retrieving a couple of sculpin and

no endangered or invasive species.

The new sewer line is being imbedded under the creek bed to avoid any damage during high water events. The current line is mounted on the upstream side of the bridge and vulnerable to damage from debris coming down the creek. When the

new line is in place, the old line will be removed.

The \$315,079.75 relocation project has been funded by a 75 percent grant from FEMA, \$115,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and from the Sisters Sewer Fund.

Full project completion is expected in late October 2021.

Grand jury charges spa owner with sex abuse

Mike Boyle of Sisters is facing multiple counts of sex abuse and other charges, after a Deschutes County Grand Jury handed up an indictment on Tuesday, September 7.

District Attorney John Hummel declined to file charges last July against the 60-year-old owner of Hop in the Spa in Sisters, after he was arrested on June 30 by Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Detectives.

At that time, Hummel told *The Nugget*, "I declined to file criminal charges in this case because I determined the State could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Boyle touched the complaining witness in an area of her body that would constitute a crime."

On September 8, his

See **BOYLE** on page 15

Mask refusal disrupts school board meeting

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

The regular monthly meeting of the Sisters School Board held Wednesday, September 8 at the school district office never got off the ground, as a group of nine or 10 attendees refused to comply with the statewide indoor mask mandate.

Before the official start of the meeting, Board Chair Don Hedrick addressed the audience of approximately 30 people, including staff and administrators, saying that in order to stay in the room masks were required.

"If you don't wear a mask, you must leave," he said.

A cluster of four women standing near the door — Kristy Cooper, Roni Moore,

Amy Larrabee, and Karen Alexander — none of whom were wearing a mask, took issue with Hedrick's statement.

"Oregon law states that we have a right to our own health decisions," said Cooper, a grandparent of students who reside in Sisters School District. "My health decision, because I have had the disease and am immune, and because I have asthma, I can't wear a mask."

Hedrick repeated, "Masks are required," to which Cooper responded, "Then you are discriminating... would you like me to read you the statute on that?"

Hedrick declined the offer and the group went

See **MEETING** on page 18

Support, concerns on shelter

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Members of the public voiced their support for the proposed permanent Cold Weather Shelter during visitor communication at last week's City Council meeting — as well as concerns about the shelter's location.

The adjacent property owner to the proposed shelter runs an adult foster care home in a matching building next door. She voiced concerns that the proposed shelter property has no yard, no driveway, and is connected to her building with a paver pathway. She is concerned about having shelter guests who may have mental health, addiction, or criminal issues right next door.

Located directly in front of the property on Tall Fir Court is a preschool full of



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Sisters Cold Weather Shelter is seeking support to acquire this house as a permanent homeless shelter in town.

young children. If any of the shelter guests were identified sex offenders, they would be in violation of their parole by being that close to a facility for children. The changing population of the shelter could increase the possibility of COVID-19 exposure. And lastly, she is concerned about the effect of the shelter on the

surrounding families and the neighborhood and property values.

Members of the shelter board spoke in favor of asking for Council support. Sharlene Weed, executive director of Habitat for Humanity, is hopeful that interested parties

See **SHELTER** on page 14