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Elementary school plans on schedule

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

According to the latest timeline published by the Sisters School District, the new elementary school building will be completed for the opening of the 2023-24 school year.

Last May, voters approved a \$33.8 million bond for the construction of the new school and other district projects.

The current elementary school is pressed to capacity, and remodeling the facility was not a viable option, according to Superintendent Curt Scholl. Additionally,

See **SCHOOL** on page 9



Autumn magnificence...

PHOTO BY CAROL STATTON

The Metolius River put on its fall colors in an annual reminder of why this place is special to everyone who lives and visits Sisters Country.

Forest restoration plans in the works

The Sisters Ranger District released a draft environmental assessment of the Green Ridge Landscape Restoration Project for a 30-day public comment period last Friday.

The 25,000-acre project area is located about nine miles north of Sisters. The goal of the project is to promote ecosystem sustainability, resilience, and health under current and future conditions in the Green Ridge project area. The assessment addresses both land and water issues.

“After significant interdisciplinary teamwork

See **PLANS** on page 21

Tourists satisfied, but room for improvement

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Visitors enjoy Sisters, but several key areas — traffic, and the availability of dining options and overnight accommodations — could be improved.

Those are conclusions drawn from a series of surveys conducted in order to create data for the destination tourism management work going on in the City of Sisters (see related story on page 15).

ECONorthwest of Bend conducted surveys for Sisters from August 12 to September 8, via emails and social media, to people who had previously visited Sisters. Lists came from Creekside Campground, Sisters Folk Festival, Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show, and other public events. They also conducted in-person tourist surveys from Friday, August 13 to Monday, August 16.

The intercept sites in town included local restaurants

and shops, trailheads and trails, recreation sites, and Black Butte Ranch and Camp Sherman. Between both types of surveys, the largest number of respondents came from Oregon (721), followed by Washington (171), California (140), other western states (90), Midwest (34), South (26), and East (24).

The data collected revealed that visitors to Sisters are in general highly satisfied with their experience, but several key areas could be improved to enhance visitor experience and encourage repeat visits. They complained about the traffic, lack of available restaurants and accommodations, and affordability. Distance, cost, crowding, and other preferred destinations are among the main reasons people would choose to not visit again.

The visitors in the surveys tend to be older, traveling without children, on three- or

See **TOURISM** on page 14

Habitat celebrates home ownership

By Jim Cornelius
Editor In Chief

Habitat for Humanity homeowners must always take a long road toward the moment when they cut the ribbon on their new abode. For Terri Gookin and Patrick and Diane Yates, who celebrated the dedication of their new homes on Bluebird Street in the ClearPine subdivision on Friday, October 22, the road was longer — and more filled with rocks and potholes — than most.

Volunteers and families spent the past two years working in pandemic conditions, with growing supply interruptions. Construction Manager Darleen Snider acknowledged all the local suppliers who help provide materials, and the volunteer “cast of characters it takes to build one of these houses.” The threat of COVID-19 reduced that cast of characters from around 20 to “six hardcore guys who have finished these houses.”

Snider said that “With COVID, it has become a definite challenge.”

But Habitat for Humanity



PHOTO BY ANGELA LUND

Terri Gookin cut the ribbon on her new townhome on Friday, October 22.

is accustomed to challenges. Its entire model — securing land, building with volunteers and often donated materials, with the “sweat equity” of homeowners poured in and a zero-interest mortgage to make it all viable — is a challenge.

Sisters Habitat for Humanity Executive Director Sharlene Weed acknowledged this in her remarks at Friday’s dedication ceremony.

“It’s truly a miracle,” she said. “These houses are a miracle. These houses are impossible.”

And yet, there they were, newly minted homeowners, their family partners and a host of volunteers and community members, watching ribbons taped across entryways as they were sliced through and fluttering to the

See **HABITAT** on page 23

Inside...

Letters/Weather 2 Announcements 8 Sisters Salutes 9 Crossword 18 Classifieds 20-22
Meetings 3 Entertainment 9 At Your Service 12-13 Sudoku 20 Real Estate 22-24