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Community ponders future of school site

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

A new elementary school to replace the existing one in Sisters is scheduled to be completed to start the 2023 school year. That leaves the school district and the citizens of Sisters to answer the question: What should be done with the property and buildings on the current site?

One of the first steps of the process took place on Monday, November 15, when the Citizens4Community (C4C) hosted a Zoom meeting to begin gathering input from interested members of the community.

The 90-minute meeting

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PHOTO BY BILL BARTLETT

Sisters woman is grand slam champion

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Jennifer Banning has been knocking off masters weightlifting titles at a torrid pace. Earlier this month, the elite Olympic weightlifter accomplished an exceptionally challenging goal: She completed a grand slam, winning gold in USA Masters Weightlifting's Nationals, PanAms, World Championships and the American Masters within a single calendar year.

Banning competed in the 50-54 age bracket and the 55-kilogram weight class. She also won best lifter for the age group across

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Sisters fire captain headed into retirement

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Over the past three decades, countless Sisters area residents have called for aid in an emergency — and got a response from Captain Thornton Brown of the Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District. As of December 1, Captain Brown will hang up his turnout gear and call it a career.

His colleagues know that he's leaving big boots to fill.

"He's been with the District since 1990, so his fingerprints are on a lot of this District," said Fire Chief Roger Johnson.

Brown managed the physical facilities, from the central station to the District's training grounds to the outlying stations in Camp Sherman and Squaw Creek Canyon Estates. And he's helped to train countless students and volunteers.

Like most boys, Brown imagined himself as a

firefighter, but he didn't chase the career early on.

"This has been an unexpected career," he said. "I just sort of fell into it. And I'm just so grateful to have it."

He "fell into it" at the urging of his friend Ken Enoch, who served many years with the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District, including as deputy chief.

"He encouraged me to volunteer," Brown recalled.

His first interest was in the medical side.

"I wanted to be an EMT and respond in the ambulance," he said.

Then the firefighting side of the service caught him.

"I got in on a burn-to-learn and after that I was hooked on the fire," he said. "That was exciting."

Brown served as a volunteer for over three years, and then-Chief Don Mouser hired him as career staff in 1994.

Brown notes that there are

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New deputy joins Sisters contingent

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Deputy Josh Westfall is the newest face in the Sisters office of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office (DCSO). He started out as temporary about a year ago while one of the other officers was on leave, but when she resigned, Westfall was able to transition to the Sisters office as his new full-time position.

"I'm happy to be out here," Westfall said. "I'm thankful to be able to serve the people of Sisters and have the opportunity to establish local relationships."

Westfall is a Central Oregon native, having grown up in Bend, graduating from Mountain View High School where he played football, and then graduating from the criminal justice program at COCC. He said that as he was growing up, he had "an intrinsic desire to help people and keep them safe," but he wasn't sure of a career path. He made the connection between helping people and law enforcement after reading



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Deputy Josh Westfall is now a full-time member of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Sisters contingent.

an article about people in their 20s being needed in the field.

"When I took my first criminal justice class, I felt like I'd been shot out of a gun," Westfall said. "I knew this was what I wanted to do."

He sees his job as a deputy being a calling. "Being a policeman isn't for everybody, but I really enjoy it and you can't put a price on satisfaction and happiness."

He began his career in

law enforcement as a reserve officer with the City of Bend. In 2008, he was hired by the DCSO where he served as a patrol officer in the Search and Rescue (SAR) division, and the last year as a temporary deputy in Sisters.

In 2012-13, he was a deputy in the "west car," which covered Sisters and other areas in the western

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