

NEWS NUGGETS

Snippets and tidbits from Sisters Country

By Bill Bartlett • Correspondent

• **Housing sales show no sign of cooling off.** The single-family home market in Sisters Country continues its red-hot pace in an otherwise usually tepid January. Another 32 homes closed with a median price of \$771,750, which is \$72,000 more than November. The average price of all homes sold was \$852,369 — a gain of more than 10 percent over last year's blistering gains.

Eight of the sales exceeded \$1 million, with one commanding \$2.2 million. Buyers continue to pour in from Portland, Seattle, and California with quality of life given as the primary reason for the migration.

Good luck finding an apartment in Sisters. There were zero listings on Sunday for traditional apartments to rent. Seven rental homes were advertised for rent at an average of \$2,585/month.

• **Construction Zone.** Sisters is in the midst of a surge in new construction particularly at the commercial level. The trees have been cut and removed from the Woodlands project at Barclay and Pine. The superstructure for the

new Sisters Coffee roastery is finished, with siding and roofing to start any day.

Ten of 50 new apartments at the Threewinds project located behind Bi-Mart are ready for occupancy and 10 more are within a few weeks of tenants moving in. The five buildings offer a range of one-, 2- and 3-bedroom units — mostly one-bedroom, where demand is greatest.

A convoy of concrete ready-mix trucks arrive daily for the 18-acre project on West Barclay and North Pine, as activity ramps up for the commercial center that will house six to eight light industrial units, the first of which is the Sisters Storage Annex where floors are poured and walls are going up.

One of six of the Sisters Cottage Inns on Locust Street behind City Hall is standing with floor, siding, and roof, while foundations for the others have been poured and framing underway.

• **Gas busts the \$4 per gallon threshold.** Regular unleaded at both ends of town is \$4.09 a gallon. The average of all four Sisters stations is \$4.04, 11 cents higher than the Oregon average. With the price of crude over \$90 and predictions of \$100 per barrel, forecasts are being made of \$5 gas in some parts of Oregon by May. Uncertainty over the Russia-Ukraine crisis is adding to the uptick.

Since January of 2021 the nationwide average has spiked

from \$2.42 to \$3.53, a 46-percent increase that is severely affecting the Sisters workforce, who must commute to Bend or Redmond or vice versa for their job.

• **Over 125 unfilled jobs remain in Sisters.** At least 89 are advertised and another roughly 30 are posted on merchant and restaurant windows. More than 40 offer salaries between \$40,000 and \$70,000, a majority with benefits. Some jobs lay unfilled for 18 months. As many skilled as unskilled openings exist in town. McDonald's is offering up to \$42,120 for some shifts, which has contributed in large part to a 10 to 15 percent menu price increase for the ubiquitous chain.

• **Ad hoc citizens group forms to promote sister city.** Scott Bowler, Karen Kassy, Barb Schultz, Bruce Williamson, and this reporter will meet soon to explore in greater detail the value of a sister-city relationship with an international town of similar size and characteristics to Sisters.

The group aims to present a proposal to City Council in May at the latest.

• **Warm weather nets a good fishing report.** The Metolius has seen decent fishing the past few weeks due to the unseasonably warm weather. The hatches are reported as odd on the river right now with lots of October caddis, as well as some smaller size 14-18 dark

tan caddis.

Nymphing can be productive all hours of the day anglers tell *The Nugget*, liking golden stone nymphs, Psycho Princes, Pheasant Tails, eggs, baetis patterns, and midges. This month, the most likely dry fly hatches will be BWOs and a few species of caddis. Fine fluorocarbon tippet is a necessity. Fish 5x fluoro on a relatively long leader (12 feet is a good length).

• **Reservoirs stuck at depressing lows.** Wickiup, the granddaddy, is at 44-percent capacity. Prineville is only at 19 percent, while Ochoco is hurting at 11 percent of its volume. These numbers do not bode well for the ongoing drought that *The Nugget* continues to cover in detail.

• **Snowpack showing weakness.** Water equivalent readings at nearby points are discouraging. Santiam Junction at 3,740 feet is 90 percent of median. Three Creek Meadow measured at 5,690 feet comes in at 89 percent the same for all of the Upper Deschutes and Crooked

River Basin.

Our southerly neighbors are faring far worse. The Klamath Basin is clocking in at an 81-percent median as compared to a worsened outlook for the Rogue/Umpqua Basin registering 79 percent, giving cause for grave concern in the upcoming fire season that by all accounts will arrive early this year.

• **In case you missed the bus.** The Bend-Sisters and Redmond-Sisters bus routes 28 and 29 discontinued Saturday service as of February 5 due to staffing shortages. A new glass shelter at the Arrowhead Trail terminus has been installed giving protection against the elements.

• **Need a rodeo fix?** If you can't wait for the Sisters Rodeo June 8-12, and are hankering for some super-charged action, then you could add the High Desert Stampede at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds, March 25-27, to your warmup list. It's a PRCA event with top name cowboys and cowgirls.

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With the impact of fresh-food shortages at grocery stores due to the pandemic and labor challenges, many people are eager to support local farms by buying farm-raised, homegrown foods through CSA programs, direct from the farmer, or at farmers markets.

Many are also looking for supplies to grow some of their own food and flowers in gardens or greenhouses.

We invite you to showcase your farm-fresh products and planting supplies for *Nugget* readers.

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