

Solar

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operational or in construction totaling just shy of \$500 million in investment, with another \$346 million worth in development."

The company also is building two new projects in southern Oregon, as well as two more in other parts of the Willamette Valley.

"We will not be blanketing the state with solar. No solar company will, because there's no avenue for that," Berg Pickett said.

At the Cypress Creek farm just outside of Silverton, mid-October clouds blanket the sky — not ideal weather for a solar harvest.

"Typically, solar farms generate energy on all daylight hours, even if there's some clouds or some snow," Berg Pickett explained. "The production would just be less."

Workers are close to finishing the array of about two dozen rows of solar panels compacted onto roughly a dozen acres just outside the Silverton city limits.

There are approximately 9,600 solar panels on the farm.

Construction may have already been underway for two to three months, but these projects can take three years "from the ground up" as they make sure to comply with local, state and federal laws, Berg Pickett said.

The Silverton site should be operating by late December or early 2018. Once construction is complete, the company plans to cover the land with grass or other



Electricians Ryan Lichty, left, of Silverton, and David Hammang, of Dayton, work on the Cypress Creek Renewables solar energy farm near Silverton on Oct. 17. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

plants.

In 2017, Oregon lawmakers introduced House Bill 3050 to limit companies' ability to plant commercial solar farms on high-value farmland, or land that is especially good for growing crops. The bill ultimately died, though.

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Issues

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ardous material survey, all attending abatement contractors stated that it would be financially and physically infeasible to remove all of the lead paint (and) declined to provide an informal proposal," Saxe's report said.

Contractors can remove the structure without abatement by securing a dedicated receiving station. Saxe said this city is formulating estimates for the cost of such a demolition.

Councilors debated an ordinance addressing public nudity, especially with regards to reports of people relieving themselves in public.

"There have been numbers of complaints, at least of the public urination, by one or more individuals in town," Mayor Kyle Palmer said.

A key point of the discussion was whether to articulate the ordinance in adherence to expressed concerns or to expand the language to include nudity. Among the issues with the nudity element is defining it, especially as how it may apply differently to children.

A state law already deals with nudity, but Police

Chief Jeff Fossholm said a nudity ordinance would give police more leverage to enforce an incident, such as someone stripping down in the creek in front of children.

Most councilors seem inclined to keep the ordinance focused on the urination and defecation.

Language, zoning and the inclusion of vaporized smoking products were also topics of discussion as the council debated a smoking ban.

"My initial understanding was that this was an objection about cigarette butts and odor. If that is the case, why include vaping?" Councilor Dana Smith asked.

The councilors discussed at length nuances of vaping, then transcended to the questions of zones to apply the ban if the ordinance passes, costs of code signs, and hours in which the ban should be in place. Regarding the latter, councilors discussed whether a downtown core smoking ban would be inappropriate during night-life hours.

The proposed ordinance emerged through the city's Environmental Management Committee, which brought its recommendation to the council on July 17.

City Manager Christy Wurster pointed out several different downtown boundaries considered to be included in the zone, one of which traces the "Walk Your Wheels" zone regulating bicycles.

A report presented to the council estimated material

and labor costs for no-smoking signs at \$382 each. Total costs vary by zone; installation from Park to Jersey streets on Water and 2nd streets is estimated at \$59,592; downtown commercial, \$61,884; commercial fringe \$97,410; Walk Your Wheels zone, \$22,538.

At least one councilor indicated that cost would be a factor he would weigh significantly when voting.

Another issue was including vaporized smoking products in the ordinance. Several members of the panel indicated they would approve that inclusion, while four members expressed opposition to it.

"It would seem to me that we have varying degrees and levels of commitment to this type of change," Councilor Jason Freiling said. "I think it's probably more likely to be a productive use of staff time, and it's going to pass, if it's focused just on the smoking aspect. If we can't come to a feeling of consensus here, we might have to have prepare two versions for us to select between."

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Voters

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Palmer pointed out that the pending measure, if passed, actually amounts to less tax per home than the expiring one, which levied \$.45 per \$1,000 assessed value or roughly \$90 for a \$200,000 home.

The gas tax is similar to one passed by Stayton last spring. Silverton's would authorize a \$.02 tax per gallon of motor vehicle fuel, levied on each gallon sold within the city.

The gas-tax measure came to the voters by state law after Silverton City Council approved a fuel-tax ordinance, No. 17-09, on June 5. If passed, it would go into effect Jan. 1.

Revenue generated from the tax would be used for street construction, reconstruction, improvements, repairs and operations.

Specific projects cited as potentially funded by the tax include the McClaine Street reconstruction, overlay of downtown streets and slurry sealing or overlay on neighborhood streets.

Palmer noted that the city council passed the ordinance with hopes of addressing long-deferred maintenance needs while spreading the burden out evenly.

The mayor estimated that a driver traveling 12,000 miles at 15 miles per gallon would pay \$16 per year.

"Currently, only residents of the Silverton city limits contribute directly to street maintenance, while many, many others use our street systems every day," Palmer wrote. "Obviously a two-cent gas tax hits us all equally,

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KYLE PALMER, SILVERTON MAYOR

but for the first time, outside residents would share in your burden."

Palmer also explained the council's challenge.

"For the past two years, we have been aggressively protecting our 'decent condition' streets by applying crack seal and slurry seal treatments through a partnership with Marion County," he said. "The proceeds from a 2 cent gas tax (every dime must be used for maintenance, construction, and preservation of streets - no staff or equipment expenses) would allow us to begin double the slurry seal program or allow us to begin what will be an expensive process of fixing McClaine Street, our number one priority."

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School

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building stand until it can be replaced.

Last month, the Silver Falls School Board batted around the pros and cons of demolishing the building now, versus letting it stand until the district is able to fund a new structure.

A financial drawback to letting it stand is the estimated \$50,000 it will cost the district to maintain the roof over the next five to 10 years, Stanley said. The diaphragm roof needs sections to be recoated periodically. It was recently fixed to stop longtime leaks, but some water damage remains, Bellando said.

Board member Shelly Nealon initially inquired about demolishing the building to avoid ongoing maintenance costs, which she said felt a little like "money going down the toilet."

Board chair Tom Buchholz said he thinks roof maintenance will cost less than moving the building's infrastructure once with demolition and again in the future. He touched on the idea of kicking off the project when taxpayers have paid off - or nearly paid off - the bonds that funded the construction of the new high school.

"Rolling demolition and construction into one project instead of two projects could be cost-effective," he said.

In other school district business:

Asst. Supt. Dandy Stevens told board members last month that she received 100 requests from families for additional bus stops after the district's contractor revised its routes. Routes to in-town and rural schools were changed in September, with some stops being eliminated. The company, Durham Student Services, is using technology "to help create the routes, which has never been done before," she said. Stevens said she's personally looking at each stop request submitted.

The school board approved the \$2,500 purchase of BoardBook, an online service that streamlines the process of creating, organizing and meeting materials. Several board members said they hope this will aid transparency with the public.

Board member Shelly Nealon agreed to pursue the school district's ongoing request with Marion County to establish the section of Grant Street outside the city limits as a school zone with reduced speeds.

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