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Silverton Pool needs work to prevent erosion

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Silverton Community Pool property needs to be shored up on the south side, according to a report by an engineering company.

A February report from Terracon Consultants of Portland recommends building a retaining wall or re-

ducing the slope angle and installing a rock buttress on the south end of the slope to mitigate erosion on the property.

The initial estimate is the fix to the pool property would cost \$150,000.

"We've learned since then it will probably be more expensive than that," Silverton Public Works director

See POOL, Page 2A



A 40-foot retaining wall has been recommended south of Silverton Community Pool. BILL POEHLER | STATESMAN JOURNAL



Around 2,500 educators, students and supporters from across the state marched around the Oregon State Capitol in support of public education on Feb. 18. Some issues they focused on included school funding, large class sizes and missing support staff among others. MICHAELA ROMÁN/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Teachers walkout possible on May 8

Oregon educators seek more funding for schools

Natalie Pate
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Educators across Oregon are planning to walk out of class May 8 should the Oregon Legislature not add an additional \$2 billion per biennium needed to maintain and improve K-12 schools.

Over the last two decades, the state has financed

schools at 21 to 38 percent below what its own research suggests districts need to be successful.

Many argue the lack of funding has resulted in educators having to do more with less. This is felt in the state's low graduation rates, high dropout and absenteeism rates, and rising issues with disruptive behaviors, mental health needs and large class sizes.

See TEACHERS, Page 3A

Sticky the Kitty lends a paw to dog in crash

Capi Lynn
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A miniature pinscher named Kyla is on the mend and getting lots of love and attention from a Silverton family after surviving a deadly car crash.

The 1-year-old, 7-pound dog is a beneficiary of the Sticky the Kitty Foundation.

Sticky, you'll recall, was rescued last fall on Silverton Road NE and became an instant celebrity, along with his human hero, Chuck Hawley.

Hawley stopped traffic on his way to work to save the 1-pound kitten whose paws were glued to the pavement. Donations came pouring in after the story went viral, and Hawley and his family launched a

foundation to help animals and humans in need.

Kyla arrived at their home March 26 after a trip to Salem Veterinary Emergency Clinic and a short stay at Marion County Dog Shelter. The Oregon State Police sergeant who transported the dog from the crash site wasn't sure she'd survive.

A smaller dog, believed to be Kyla's puppy, didn't. The puppy suffered head injuries and had to be euthanized, according to the sergeant.

"Sad story," Hawley texted the day his wife, Mikiee brought the dog home, "but a happy ending for this one at least."

Kyla suffered a back injury the night of March 21 after being ejected from a vehicle involved in a police

See PAW, Page 3A

Silverton, Mt. Angel city leaders search for sludge solutions

Christena Brooks
Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

What to do with the poo is a question every city has to answer.

In Silverton and Mt. Angel, toilet flushes have been adding up, so their wastewater treatment facilities are filling up, too. Now city leaders are doing business with the brown stuff the rest of us would rather ignore.

Bio solids, or "sludge," is the stuff left behind after the sewage treatment process has removed and treated most of the water that came with it. Cities can hold it for a while, but eventually, it has to go somewhere.

Mt. Angel's facultative lagoon system – three lagoons and a wetland – has been storing sludge for 27 years, and engineers say it's time to dredge it up to keep things running smoothly. Permits alone are expected cost up to \$50,000, but the city's been saving since the lagoons were built in 1992, so those funds, plus \$1 million for the work, are in savings.

"This is the first time the system will be dredged," said City Manager Amber Mathiesen. "It was originally designed to be a 20-year plant, but Mt. Angel hasn't grown as quickly as engineers anticipated. Now we may have five to seven more years, but that's if no additional growth happens."

The system is far from failing, said wastewater treatment operator John Korecki. Each month, the Environmental Protection Agency requires Mt. Angel to remove a monthly average of 85 percent of biochemical oxygen demand, or BOD, from the wastewater, and its plant is typically in the 95 percent range, he said.

But he and engineers want to stay ahead of quality problems with the water Mt. Angel releases into the Pudding River after it's treated. The lagoon system is a natural process that uses bacteria to slowly break down material. A wetland full of duckweed, cattails and pennywort is the last step before chlorination, de-chlorination and release into the river.

"In a system like this, you don't any have control over it; you're always reacting to what it's doing," Korecki said. "It's usually about 30 days from the time wastewater comes in to when it's discharged, but as the sludge level rises, then the processing time to get bacteria out of the water is reduced."

Located northwest of town, the treatment plant appears serene, almost beautiful. It's home to ducks, egrets, eagles and other birds. Nutria, water-loving rodents, are the most troublesome because they weaken the earthen dikes by burrowing at the water's edge, Korecki said.

It's fulltime work, warding off pests, cleaning screens, keeping water circulating, repairing equipment and conducting tests. In an old Ford Ranger, purchased surplus from the state police, he makes daily rounds, checking water levels, opening and shutting valves, taking water samples back to the lab and more.

City leaders are fast-tracking the dredging project largely because they need to find a place to put the sludge as it's removed from the ponds. Everyone's hoping to find a farmer willing to apply it to his or her grass field. Many cities, including Silverton, do this, but Mt. Angel's bio-solids will include untreated and partially treated sewage because residents will be flushing, washing and bathing right up until dredging.

"The sludge product is not fully composted, fully stable," Mathiesen said. "It's essentially raw sewage. My understanding is that any farmer that takes this will have 24 hours to get it tilled under."

See SLUDGE, Page 4A

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