

Remedial Steps In Solving City's Sewage Problems Deemed Necessary

By RILEY ALLEN
Observer Staff Writer

It is deemed imperative that the city of La Grande take remedial steps toward the solving of its sewage disposal problem.

That such a problem exists is evident by excerpts from a letter dated Sept. 25, 1959, and signed by Kenneth H. Spies, Deputy State Sanitary Engineer, one of which said:

"In July, 1953, representatives

of the State Sanitary Authority made a thorough survey of the sewage treatment plant, including complete sampling of the processes, and issued a report which included recommendations for improving operation and maintenance. Because the findings outlined in the report showed that the treatment plant as it existed was not capable of producing the degree of treatment required by Oregon law, it was believed that reduction

of the hydraulic load would alleviate the situation by construction of storm sewers, diverting this water elsewhere. A bond issue of \$230,000 was passed and the job was completed about 1950.

Even this action was only partially successful because the original construction of the plant was, by this time, obsolete and its ability to filter and purify reduced to only a portion of its capacity to function when new.

Its malfunction is caused by the filling up of the filter beds. They are almost impervious and incapable of either mechanical filtration or of supporting the abundance of bacteria necessary to do the job.

The replacing of this used up material and the reconstruction of the present plant to where it will function properly is estimated by the engineering firm of Cornell, Howland, Hayes and Morrill, field at a minimum of \$437,000.

But it constitutes virtually reconstruction of the entire plant. That would also present the problem of how sewage would be disposed of during the estimated two months of reconstruction.

The same firm estimates the cost of a completely new lagoon system at \$300,000 which is considerably lower.

Less Maintenance

The secondary advantage of the lagoon system is a much lower cost in maintenance which is estimated at \$5,000 per year. The present mechanical plant costs about \$25,000 to operate. The difference is primarily that the lagoon system is so very simple of construction that little maintenance is required.

The only mechanical devices are a pump, a pipeline and some valves for diverting the sewage from one pond to the alternate. The primary maintenance will be the cutting of the grass inside the fences surrounding the ponds and prevention of formation of holes in the dikes.

There are no filtering devices to clog up since bacteria literally consumes the sewage, and evaporation in the ideal season will maintain a constant level of about 4 1/2 feet of water in the ponds. During periods of low evaporation the plan calls for chlorination of the waters which bypass the ponds.

Construction of the lagoon system is a simple one though of some proportions. An option on 230 acres in a strategic location

has been obtained by the city. This is about 40 acres more than is needed at the present. Construction of about 1 1/2 miles of pipeline will be needed from the present mechanical plant to the intake of the new ponds. There a diversion box is needed with two pipes and valves which will govern the flow of sewage into the main pond or the alternate. These pipes will terminate in the centers of the ponds where they will discharge their waste material.

No Seepage

Construction of the ponds consist of dikes, somewhat higher than a man's head, around each 45 acre pond. Only enough excavating is done to remove the soil and expose an impervious material, capable of containing the sewage and preventing seepage.

This point is important—there is no seepage—there can be no seepage because the water level must be maintained at near the 4 1/2 foot level or the ponds won't function properly.

What happens to the solids? Bacteria consumes it as is provided by a plant in South Dakota that has been in operation since 1928. The build-up around the discharge pipes in an alluvial fan with maximum depth is about 1 1/2 feet with still 3 feet of water over the top of it and no solids of any kind visible. This would suggest a life for the ponds of about 60 to 100 years. "Suggest" is the only safe word to use since there are no ponds of that age in existence.

A recent article in The Oregonian concerning a similar project in Prineville sounded an ominous note. The writer was giving only part of the story, however, when he suggested that there was no guarantee the installation would be accepted. That is true—so far as it goes. It is, also true that the mechanical filtration plant would not be guaranteed or accepted until thoroughly tested and proved. The authority does not guarantee anything, even a water system, until it has been checked out and deemed operational and satisfactory. There is every bit as good chance that the lagoon system will give an acceptable end product as there is that the mechanical filtration plant will.

Two Elgin Teen-Agers Killed In Wreck

(SEE STORY, PICTURE BOTTOM OF PAGE)

LA GRANDE OBSERVER

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Objection To Plant Site Noted

La Grande city commissioners will meet with residents of the Island City area at 7:30 p.m. Monday following a wave of protests by some county residents who live near the site of a proposed lagoon-type oxidation sewage treatment plant.

The meeting is scheduled at the Island City Farm Bureau hall and is expected to pack in many residents of the area who are voicing objections to a sewage treatment facility northeast of the city's present treatment plant.

City commissioners also will meet with local residents Tuesday night at the junior high school auditorium to discuss Friday's \$360,000 bond election for the new sewage facility.

Voices Objections

Dr. F. M. Kovach, Island City veterinarian, summed up most of the objection today when he told The Observer, "I am against lagoons for sewage because I don't want to live next to them. The plant would reduce values," he said.

He added that he had invested heavily in his home and acreage in the county and that the proposed oxidation ponds would adjoin his property.

"Lagoons would probably bring in an undesirable type industry such as rendering and packing plants," he stated.

Dr. Kovach said there were about 20 property owners in the immediate vicinity of the 230 acres that the city has an option on for the proposed new sewage facility.

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Beware The State

What happens, if the bond issue is rejected by the voters? The alternative is most unpleasant—it borders on the dictatorial.

Since the State Sanitary Authority has been patient with this city for about ten years it is reasonable to assume that their patience may be wearing a bit thin. It is within its power to take legal action against a city as it has done in a number of instances, including Portland. It might possibly construct a system of its own choice and demand payment from us. The price could be formidable.

Our decision is based on information obtained from the most competent sources, from men who have been struggling with the problem for years and a highly reputable engineering firm as well as the State Sanitary Authority. There can be only one answer on this issue.

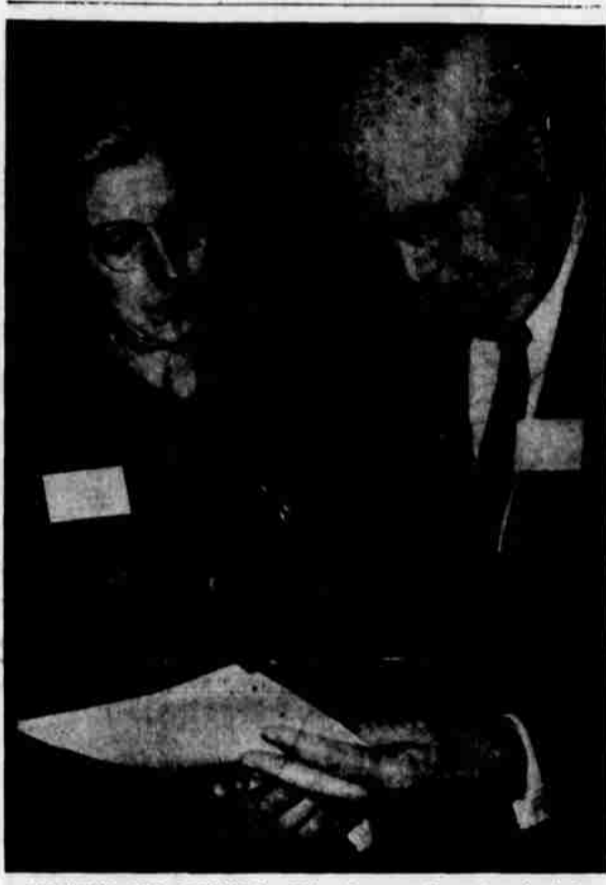
A favorable vote would mean an initial savings to the city of \$100,000 as well as an additional \$20,000 yearly in maintenance. The savings would be reflected in individual tax statements and the monthly garbage bills. It would be considerable.

An Added Safety Factor

That the number of acceptable available sites is limited is a well recognized fact. But it seems most unfortunate that the site chosen is so near an area where several houses already exist and in an area that has the potential of being further subdivided as the movement to the country increases.

Unless the ponds are completely sealed and made to function perfectly there may be some contamination from seepage. Should this happen the water supply of a wide area could be ruined. As an additional safety factor it seems the logical thing to search for an area where there are no existing residences where the water table is low and one that is not likely to become desirable in the near future. It's quite an order.

Howling Storm Sweeps East With Rain, Snow



CONFER ON AGENDA—Miss Jeanne Jewett, administrator of the State Public Welfare Commission, confers with Commission Chairman J. H. Luhn during a break in the commission's meeting here yesterday. (Observer Photo)

United Press International

A vicious autumn storm swept eastward toward the central plains states today, leaving behind widespread damage, closed schools and highways, stranded hunters and hundreds of homeless Rocky Mountain residents.

The whistling storm lashed out of California and the Southwest into the mountains Friday. Heavy snows, flash floods and 92-mile-an-hour winds combined to cause hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage.

The storms left three persons dead, all in Arizona, where raging rivers formed in deserts and Phoenix reported a rare snowfall.

At Ogden, Utah, the Red Cross reported the winds had ripped roofs from many homes and had toppled scores of power lines, plunging hundreds of homes into a chilly darkness.

Four inches of snow fell at Cedar City and Parowan, Utah, and Imperial and North Platte, Neb., reported five inches.

The weather bureau said the storm would spread through Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota before dying out. Snow was reported falling last night in eastern Colorado, Wyoming, Northern New Mexico, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

The snow was mixed with freezing rain in many areas, laying a glaze of ice on highways in Colorado, Kansas and South Dakota, and delaying the plane carrying the Air Force Academy's football team to New York for its game with Army.



COLLEGE RECRUITMENT

Vernon Barkhurst, left, shows La Grande High School students Dave Slaßbaugh, Dick Roth and Leroy Mobley (left to right) an entrance requirement sheet on the University of Oregon. Barkhurst was one of several persons visiting the local school from colleges and universities throughout the state. Other colleges represented were Oregon State College, Oregon Tech and Portland School of Nursing. (Observer Photo by Joe Diehl)

Revised Medical Care Plan For Indigents Is Outlined

By BILL BEBOUT
Observer Staff Writer

A revised medical care plan for Oregon's public assistance recipients which would put the responsibility for determining the amount of aid necessary on the physician instead of welfare agencies was outlined here yesterday by the State Public Welfare Commission.

The plan, which the commission hopes to put in operation in some counties in the near future, would give Oregon physicians the right to proceed with diagnostic and treatment services without "unnecessary red tape or obstacles," Dr. James Stewart, chief medical consultant to the commission, said.

Responsibilities

The plan would also leave hospital administrators free to provide services and facilities requested by the attending physician with a clear understanding of the agency's responsibility and limits of responsibility, Stewart said.

Dr. Stewart said that policies and procedures concerning the provision of drugs are now being formulated and physicians and pharmacists will be made aware of the agency's resources, and the

See REVISED Page Two

Speeding By Young Drivers Nets Arrest

Two teen-age drivers were arrested last night for conducting a speed contest on Adams Ave.

One offender was taken into custody at Fourth Street and Jefferson Avenue and the other arrested at the police station at 9:30 p.m. Bail was set at \$25 for both parties and a hearing scheduled for 3 p.m. Monday.

Conditions Critical

Two Oregon hunters, trapped for about four hours in the wreckage of their jeep Thursday night, were still reported in critical condition today at the Grande Ronde Hospital. They are Donald Kaufman, 28, Canby, and John Fisher, 44, Hubbard.

WEATHER

Fair through Sunday; highs 53-58; low tonight 20-25.

Fear Mexico Death Toll 2,000 Following Cyclone And Floods

MEXICO CITY (UPI)—Authorities feared today the death toll in a cyclone-whipped series of floods that wiped out ten West Coast communities Tuesday may rise as high as 2,000.

Nearly 800 persons were reported dead, 600 in the community of Minatitlan alone but it appeared the death toll would be much higher. Another 133 persons were reported critically injured in Minatitlan, which had a population of only 900.

It was reported earlier that most of the town's population was buried under tons of mud that cascaded down upon it. The mud was loosened by heavy rains driven by violent, cyclonic winds. The storms and floods brought devastation to four states on the Pacific Coast.

A reporter for a Mexico City newspaper reported only one member of a 100-man army garrison at Minatitlan survived. He said the survivor, Lt. Salvador Botello, "is on the brink of insanity and speaks like a man in his sleep."

The reporter, Roberto Cardenas, said he flew over Minatitlan, now covered by a vast, still layer of water and mud. He said the "cemetery city" had a terrifying "Dante-like look" of silence and destruction.

President Adolfo Lopez Mateos was in personal charge of efforts to bring relief to survivors in the disaster areas.

Elks Dance Tonight

La Grande Elks will hold their annual Halloween dance tonight at 10 o'clock at the Elks Lodge.

Elgin Pair Found Inside Burned Auto

By BILL BEBOUT
Observer Staff Writer

ELGIN (Special)—State Police were probing the burned wreckage of an automobile near here this morning when the wreckage was discovered about 10:15 a.m. with the bodies of a teen-age pair inside.

Pronounced dead upon examination by Deputy Coroner Everett C. Abbott, La Grande, and investigating State Police out of La Grande, were John Kennedy, Jr., 19, and Shelia Stine, 15, both of Elgin.

Police were able to determine only that the teen-agers had left last night for a dance at Elgin. Whether or not they had ever arrived at the dance was not immediately known.

The auto had left the lane that led into the Stine girl's home, apparently headed in the opposite direction, and had traversed a plowed field for 300 feet, ending up in a large ditch.

The engine of the car apparently caught fire, the intense heat melting the plastic dashboard instruments. Cause of the fire was not known.

Extent of the fire or cause of death had not been determined by press time.

Young Kennedy was a graduate of Elgin High School. The Stine girl was a student at the school, authorities said. The car was discovered by Elgin hunters four miles north of here in the Rock Wall Grange region.



EXAMINE DEATH CAR

Members of the family of Shelia Stine and a State Police officer examine the auto in which the bodies of the teen-age girl and her companion, John Kennedy, Jr., were discovered this morning by several young Elgin hunters. Authorities were baffled over the accident which apparently happened sometime last night. (Observer Photo)

WORLD OF MAKE BELIEVE-

Small Fry To Knock On Doors Tonight In Halloween Venture

By GRADY PANNELL
Observer Staff Writer

The world of make believe will uncoil before the eyes of La Grande's small fry tonight when they knock on doors and ring bells to usher in Halloween.

For the to's, it's the one night they believe in fiercely, and they will tell you that behind every bush and rock lurks a goblin of some sort, their fellow companion of the murky night.

The other boy or girl behind some grinning false face and equally severe garb is not one of them, they say, "he's some kind of spirit from way out there."

And so they go their paths of adventure, each older age bracket daring to go just a little bit farther and a little more recklessly than they did the year before.

A grinning, lighted pumpkin will startle them, but not for long; each dark shadow is a witch riding a broomstick; a black cat that should chance to cross before them is an age-old meaning handed down from mother or dad, and the moaning wind is the voice of the dead.

Halloween is almost as old as humanity, starting in pagan days as a "religious type observance" in the autumn when a certain weekend was mourned.

When the summer sun dropped south and the chill winds blew, the Celts observed the occasion in deadly earnest; they sacrificed human lives in an effort to bring back the sun.

The Christians observed Halloween while still in the catacombs. In the early 800's a certain day was declared All Saint's Day and the hallowed or Halloween Day was established.

"Old wives' tails" kept alive the ancient beliefs and customs of Halloween, however, as the stories told of tortured spirits reaming the earth seeking revenge on their enemies.

Our early ancestors used to carry lanterns on Halloween to frighten off the bad spirits. The Jack O' Lantern is a custom that descended from this early belief.

Halloween today is known as the eve of All Saints' Day, and in the spirit of the occasion the young people—especially the children—garb themselves in make believe.

In keeping with the local observance by children, Police Chief Oliver Reeve stated that "trick or treat" night would be tonight.

Plane Down With 27 Aboard Over Virginia

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (UPI)—A Piedmont Airlines plane with 27 persons aboard was long overdue today on a flight from Washington to Roanoke, Va., and apparently had crashed in a rugged stretch of Blue Ridge Mountain country. An air and ground search was bogged down by bad weather.

Fog, mist and a slight drizzle settled over a 40-square-mile area of the desolate mountain terrain where the DC3 disappeared Friday night after a routine radio call to Charlottesville for landing instructions.

There was little hope for the plane, which would have run out of fuel at 8 p.m. (p.s.t.), but a massive search was mobilized in hope it made an emergency landing or crashed in such a manner there may have been survivors.

Ground parties were sent to investigate one report from a farmer just north of Standardville, Va., that he heard an explosion last night. The Civil Air Patrol said it had no verification of the report but intended to check all leads.

Piedmont said the plane had to be presumed down in an area about 20 miles north of Charlottesville and about 100 miles south of Washington.