

DAILY PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 29, the 241st day of 2018. There are 124 days left in the year.



TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On Aug. 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast near Buras, Louisiana, bringing floods that devastated New Orleans. More than 1,800 people in the region died.

ON THIS DATE

In 1862, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing began operations at the United States Treasury.

In 1864, the Democratic National Convention, which nominated Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan for president, opened in Chicago.

In 1877, the second president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Brigham Young, died in Salt Lake City, Utah, at age 76.

In 1910, Korean Emperor Sunjong abdicated as the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty went into effect.

In 1944, 15,000 American troops of the 28th Infantry Division marched down the Champs Elysees (shahms ay-lee-ZAY') in Paris as the French capital continued to celebrate its liberation from the Nazis.

In 1957, the Senate gave final congressional approval to a Civil Rights Act after South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond (then a Democrat) ended a filibuster that had lasted 24 hours.

In 1958, pop superstar Michael Jackson was born in Gary, Indiana.

In 1962, Malvin R. Goode began covering the United Nations for ABC-TV, becoming network television's first black reporter.

In 1965, Gemini 5, carrying astronauts Gordon Cooper and Charles "Pete" Conrad, splashed down in the Atlantic after 8 days in space.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$6.3 million
3-4-22-25-28-48

Mega Millions: \$152 million
3-20-33-34-41-20 x3

Powerball: \$80 million
20-25-54-57-63-PB 8-x2

Win for Life: Aug. 27
12-13-29-73

Pick 4: 28

- 1 p.m.: 4-7-4-0
 - 4 p.m.: 2-9-0-9
 - 7 p.m.: 5-1-6-9
 - 10 p.m.: 7-1-0-3
- Pick 4:** Aug. 27
- 1 p.m.: 5-1-5-5
 - 4 p.m.: 2-9-6-4
 - 7 p.m.: 6-2-1-6
 - 10 p.m.: 1-0-7-4
- Pick 4:** Aug. 26
- 1 p.m.: 2-0-6-9
 - 4 p.m.: 2-2-3-9
 - 7 p.m.: 8-4-6-3
 - 10 p.m.: 6-8-0-3

ROAD REPORT

Numbers to call:
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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"People are very open-minded about new things — as long as they're exactly like the old ones."

— Charles F. Kettering, American inventor (1876-1958).

Pros and cons of Greenway Project discussed

Second round of hearings held in Island City

By Dick Mason
The Observer

The Grande Ronde River Greenway Project is a polarizing issue.

This was clear again Tuesday night during the second of three hearings on the Grande Ronde River Greenway Project being conducted by Island City's city council.

The hearing was conducted by the council to take input on how it should use a \$1.1 million grant from the state for Phase II of the Grande Ronde River Greenway Project. The grant, awarded in 2016, is for a trail that would run from an area east of Riverside Park to a pond in eastern Island City north of Highway 82.

Supporters said the Greenway would draw in visitors, boost the local economy and improve the overall quality of life for residents. Opponents expressed a fear that having a public path close to their homes will cause problems. "I'm completely opposed

to the project," said Julie Bodfish, who owns a home with her husband, John, adjacent to the proposed Greenway path.

The Bodfishes are one of four families who own land along the proposed routes for which easements would have to be purchased by the city.

Bodfish noted at Tuesday's meeting the owners of the four pieces of property sent a letter on Aug. 5 to Island City Mayor Delmer Hanson, City Recorder Karen Howton and Island City's city council stating they have no intention of selling easements to the city.

"We have told you multiple times in every way we know that you will not be granted a right-of-way or be sold our property," the letter stated. "We do not support this project in any way."

The letter also stated there is no support from any homeowners who will be affected along the path.

"We are beyond tired of this situation. There is no good way to resolve the problems that you face. We are asking you to just stop," the property owners said in the letter.

Easements would be needed for Option A, which was discussed at an Aug. 21 city council hearing, and Option B. No easements would be needed for Option C, because it calls for two bridges to be constructed. Option C, however, would cost \$2.69 million, significantly more than the other options, because of the cost of construction.

Several people at Tuesday's hearing told the city council it should consider Option C because it would have less impact on landowners.

Option C will be discussed at the Sept. 6 hearing. This option calls for a pathway from May Lane that would follow the river until it reaches a severely eroded cut bank and a private property. At this point a bridge would be built on the north side of the river, and a second bridge would be constructed on the south side of the river farther down the trail.

Option A calls for a 10-foot wide, 6,000-foot pathway to run from the end of the existing Phase I trail east of Riverside Park to the Island City pond. The path would follow the south bank of the Grande Ronde River.

Option B, known as the "Ditch Easement" option, would follow the same path as Options A and C until it reaches private property. The pathway would then follow a ditch easement through two to five other properties before reaching the Island City park area at the pond site.

A number of people at the hearing said the Greenway Project is needed because there are few safe places to ride bicycles in the La Grande and Island City area. Susan Brudi said the cities of La Grande and Island City would be better off focusing energy and resources on creating safer bike riding areas in the community.

Allen Evans of La Grande said he is a supporter of the Greenway Project. He enjoys bicycling on the trail built as part of Phase I and would look forward to riding on a longer trail.

Anita Metlen of Imbler expressed a similar point of view.

"It would be a huge asset to the community," she said.

Jim Welch, who lives near where the proposed route would be, said the public path would violate his privacy and provide security

concerns. He fears that individuals would use the trail for illegal activities and he would have to draw down the curtains to prevent people from looking inside his home. He said this would prevent him from enjoying the good views he paid for when he bought the house.

"I oppose it vehemently," he said.

Mary McCracken of La Grande spoke in support of the project. She said it would boost the overall quality of life of people in Union County because more people would have access to the Grande Ronde River and a place to walk and bicycle.

"I think we should pay attention to the entire community even if (the Greenway path) makes some people feel uneasy," she said.

McCracken believes the trail might boost the value of homes along the route because it would provide greater access to an exercise site and to nature.

Robb Rea, Island City's mayor pro tem, said the city council hopes to make a decision on which option to select at its Oct. 8 meeting.

Local nonprofit provides resources to help those in transition

Program aims to provide job training, housing and more to homeless, unemployed

By Audrey Love
The Observer

Hannah Voetberg describes herself, albeit jokingly, as someone who "just doesn't know when to quit." Her outreach in the La Grande community includes two nonprofits, both of which she helped establish: Neighbors Together, a volunteer organization servicing Union County, and her newest venture, Abundant Life Transitional Services.

"The heart of (Abundant Life) is to reach people whose lives are definitely less than stable or productive... and to help them transition into a more stable situation," Voetberg said. "Help people do some problem solving to transition into a better lifestyle — that would be our goal."

Established in June, ALTS was created by Voetberg and partners, Jack St. Clair and Alecia Harris, with a singular goal in mind — meeting community transitional needs that other comparable services don't.

"We don't want to duplicate services," Voetberg said of the major difference between Abundant Life and other community outreach programs. "We're after (the) gaps in services."

While ALTS may typically focus on improving quality of life for those who are unemployed, underemployed, homeless or living in substandard housing, the program doesn't solely limit its aid to those four groups.

"Anybody who is down on their luck or is living in (a situation that is unhealthy or not ideal) — we can take them," Voetberg said of the people ALTS hopes to help. "We'll help solve the barriers. We'll develop with them what we call an individual written transition plan (and) help them achieve it."

Voetberg estimates there are nearly 4,700 people, roughly 18 percent of the population, living below the poverty line in Union County.

Voetberg notes a specific

need within the homeless community, including nearly 200 homeless school-age children, by Voetberg's estimations, who seek shelter in public parks, wooded areas (when weather allows) and vehicles.

"We have a whole population here who live in cars, travel trailers, (etc., and) a fair number of either homeless people or people living in (unsuitable) places," she said. "Employment is somewhat limited here by the selection of employers, but also (by) the skills you need to have."

Providing the resources for job training, work experience and improvement of job-related skills is one of three phases ALTS is currently establishing as part of its program. Voetberg noticed a lack of communication between various outreach services in the county, and as part of the program's first phase, she hopes to create a resource database all services can potentially share.

As an extension of the database, she also wants to create a sort of "portable file," including necessary forms and other needed information, that those working for ALTS can transport with them to different locations — allowing them to bring the program directly to those

who need it. Voetberg also hopes to acquire funding to help overcome some of the barriers those in transition typically face.

"We're working on having a driving instructor for people 18 and older because (not having a license) is one of the biggest barriers to employment," she said of remaining phase one plans. "We've talked to an attorney and we're (planning to) set up some sort of fund or way to help people get (charges) expunged off their records because that's (another) huge barrier."

The next phase would then be to implement job or skills training and provide paid work experience either in partnership with local businesses or through programs provided by ALTS.

"We have ideas (concerning) small business or small industry, where people can get work experience in a safe place where they're not going to get fired the first time they're late, where they can really work on life skills and work skills," Voetberg said.

She wants to initiate jobs within the program — for example, bicycle repair, handyman services such as lawn mowing, and restoring and reselling used appliances — as a starting point

to build resumes and bolster confidence among those in the program. She's also in the process of obtaining computers for a small computer lab where transitioners can practice their technological skills.

"Why not (give) people who are underemployed or unemployed the chance to make a little money and help some people out," Voetberg said, adding that she's still in the researching process of phase two and seeking out employers and businesses to make those plans a reality.

ALTS's final phase includes transitional housing — either through purchasing property and building a series of small cottages to create a makeshift community, or through a "boarding house" type model. Voetberg plans for the housing to be a more permanent, stable

solution that participants would be able to utilize for up to a year.

"Now (is) the challenging part," she said of the program's progress, "where you start going from an idea and (the) basic incorporation to actually being in full operation."

As far as locating those who could potentially benefit from the program, Voetberg said, "I'll get them any way I can," which includes reaching out to community

See **Outreach** / Page 3A

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