

Council Moves Forward With Sewer Rate Change

The Vernonia City Council directed staff to move forward with proposed changes to current city sewer rates, following a Public Hearing on March 7, 2016.

The proposed sewer rate change would mimic the way water rates are currently charged, using a meter size multiplier to figure individual customer's base rate and loan repayment fee. The proposed change also adds a consumption fee which charges each customer for their sewage that is sent to the treatment plant.

At the Public Hearing city staff provided the City Council with a chart that outlined the sample charges under the proposed changes, showed the meter multiplier rates, as well as the consumption charges.

The City currently charges a base rate charge of \$36.00 and a loan repayment fee of \$57.00, for a total of \$93.00 for sewer usage.

Under the new billing proposal, for customers with 5/8 and 3/4 inch meters, which is the majority of City's residential utility customers, the base rate would be reduced to \$23.95 and the loan repayment fee reduced \$55.27. According to City staff there are only 22 customers with meters larg-

er than 5/8 or 3/4. The consumption charge that would be added to each customer's bill is \$2.31 per thousand gallons of water used.

The new rates will reward those customers who conserve and put less burden on the treatment system. Those customers whose consumption is higher will pay more.

Under this new rate structure, customers with 5/8 or 3/4 sized meters who use less than 6,000 gallons of water per month would see a reduction in their bill and customers who use more than 6,000 gallons would see an increase.

The new rate structure shows that customers with larger meters would see an increase in the base rate and the loan repayment fee but would pay the same \$2.31 per thousand gallons consumption charge.

In order to determine the consumption charge the City will follow an industry standard practice that uses each customer's wintertime average water usage. Customer's usage during the four winter months of November-February will be tabulated and averaged and will be the amount used to bill the consumption charge for the following eight months. This excludes from the tabulation

continued on page 5

Loggers Win State Championship!

The Vernonia Loggers are the OSAA 2A boys basketball state champions!

The Loggers defeated the #1 ranked Regis Rams 57-49 on Saturday, March 5, 2016 in Pendleton and brought home the first state championship for a Vernonia team in almost 40 years.

Winning the state championship capped an incredible season by the Loggers, who finished with a 28-1 record. After losing their opening game to Clatskanie, the Loggers reeled off 28 straight wins. "I was encouraged to see this team show up each and every night throughout our season and put teams away," said fifth year Logger head coach David Weller in an interview after the team returned to Vernonia.



continued on page 10

Oregon Legislature Earmarks \$7.5 Million for Advanced Manufacturing Research Center in Columbia County

Big news came out of the Oregon Legislature with the announcement of \$7.5 million to be appropriated for the creation of an Advanced Manufacturing Research Center (AMRC).

The facility will be located in Columbia County. The project, built on the synergy of regional industry, academia and government stakeholders, is based in part on an AMRC apprenticeship model developed by Boeing and the University of Sheffield in England to address critical manufacturing challenges through applied research and advanced technical training.

The state of Oregon's investment will be added to \$9.4 million in bonding authority from Portland Community College (PCC) to support educational opportunities in Columbia County, for a total investment of nearly \$17 million. Additional sources of financial support potentially include private and public investors

and federal grants.

The AMRC will replace the proposed education center that PCC had discussed constructing in Columbia County for several years.

"This is an investment not just in high tech manufacturing, but in our workforce, in regional job growth, and our state's economic future," said Governor Kate Brown. "Today we are taking an important step forward, developing a world-class community where instruction, research, design, and manufacturing intersect for the benefit of all."

Initial efforts will focus on training for students through industry-sponsored skilled apprenticeships that lead to postsecondary credentials and family-wage jobs. This will be led by PCC as the educational accrediting partner. Advanced manufacturing research activities will be led by local university and research

partners such as Oregon State University (OSU), Portland State University (PSU) and the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT).

"As the state's largest higher education and workforce training institution serving a five-county region, Portland Community College is thrilled to collaborate with a consortium of local partners to support this transformational opportunity," said Sylvia Kelley, interim president of PCC.

Additional stakeholders and potential partners include Boeing and other regional metals manufacturers, the Oregon Employment Department, the Bureau of Labor and Industries, the AFL-CIO, Greater Portland Inc., the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and

continued on page 6

inside

3 it's good to be king

7 the good ol' days

8 a cannabis vision

16 school district contemplates debt



Warrenton Denies Permits for Oregon LNG

An impartial City of Warrenton Hearings Officer ruled on March 8, 2016, that the Oregon LNG terminal project proposed to be built in Warrenton would interfere with public trust rights, violate local laws to protect salmon, and periodically block public access to traditional fishing grounds. Oregon LNG has the right to appeal the Hearings Officer's final order to the Warrenton City Council.

The City of Warrenton ruled: "[T]he project will unreasonably interfere with significant public trust rights in the form of adverse impacts to fish habitat in this portion of the Lower Columbia River Estuary . . ."

The Hearings Officer noted the proposed dredging of the Columbia River for LNG tankers and the extensive filling of wetlands:

"Regarding the significance of the project's impact, again, the Officer cannot credit the applicant's attempts to minimize the impacts of the 109-acre dredge footprint and 35 acre permanent wetland impact, which state and federal environmental agencies regarded as significant."

Oregon LNG proposes building an LNG terminal in Warrenton, Oregon, and exporting North American natural gas to overseas markets. The project requires building over 200 miles of new, high-pressure gas pipeline through Oregon and Washington that would cross salmon-bearing streams, including Rock Creek above the intact to the City of Vernonia water supply, the Columbia River, farms, forestland, and close to homes. LNG uses fracked gas, recognized as a significant contributor to

climate change.

Among the project's many regional impacts, the company proposes dredging an area the size of 102 football fields in the Columbia River. Oregon LNG selected the most popular sport and commercial salmon fishing area on the Columbia for its massive dock and ship turning basin. The gas pipeline requires using eminent domain and restricting how landowners can use property within the pipeline easement. In 2013, Clatsop County denied a 41-mile long segment of gas pipeline to the terminal.

The state has not acted on multiple permits to build and operate the LNG project.

Oregon LNG has fourteen days to appeal to the Warrenton City Commission.