Renfro says changes save $95,000

Recent changes in the organization of the Clackamas County Tax Division saved the county $95,000, according to County Sheriff John Renfro.

Renfro spoke to a noon meeting of the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, and discussed changes in the department since he took office in January.

The County Tax Division is under the authority of the sheriff in Clackamas County.

Renfro said he had met with the commissioners in December and had asked that the tax division be left in his department.

"Historically, the sheriff has been the tax collector here," he told the Chamber.

The sheriff said the savings has come from utilizing a computer system and depositing tax money immediately after receipt so it could collect interest.

Renfro said the county is "plagerizing" a program used in Washington County and also is utilizing the services of private banks in the county.

By switching to the computer system the county has reduced labor costs by $65,000 a year, Renfro said.

Three and a half cents of each dollar collected by the county goes to county services.

"Six-tenths of a cent goes to operate my department," said the sheriff.

Collecting taxes is not a money-maker for the county, he said. It's an economic loss.

"The county is subsidizing service districts at a dead loss," the sheriff noted.

Renfro said a change in personnel duties, as well as a change in system and department location, will probably lead to hectic days in the tax department later this year.

"I hope the public will understand and be patient," he told the Chamber.

Renfro also told the Chamber that he sees the day coming when the Mt. Hood area will need a precinct station. Extra patrol services will be needed as the area grows, he said.

"We are cognizant of the tremendous population growth in the area," he said. The county also is considering the addition of a precinct in the Wilsonville area.

Renfro had praise for the Sandy Police Department, and said Sandy is probably "getting far more for the dollar than any other city."

The Clackamas County Sheriff's Office is 92 per cent labor intensive, Renfro said.

It costs $17 an hour to have a deputy and patrol car on the street.

"It's very expensive," he said.

The sheriff's budget for next year will be $4 million.

Renfro told the Chamber that it takes five people working in eight hour shifts to keep one person on the streets patroling at all times. That takes into account vacation time and days off.

The department's goal for answering calls is for less than five minutes in the more populated areas and 15 minutes in the rural areas.

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Board expansion supported at hearing

The question of expanding the Clackamas County Commission from three to five members may be put before county residents as a result of a compromise to Sen. Walt Brown's proposal.

Brown, a Clackamas County Democrat, said an amendment would put the issue before the electorate and would satisfy some of the opposition to his bill.

The proposal was before the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee Monday and testimony generally supported the move. However, opposition from colleagues in the legislature led to the compromise plan, Brown said.

Brown proposed the amendments to refer the question to the voters and the Senate committee accepted them.

Commissioners Robert Schumacher and Ralph Groener are opposed to the county board expansion, contending that it would be costly to taxpayers and that control of the issue should be in the county's—and not the state's—jurisdiction.

Clackamas County Chairman Stan Skoko supports the measure.

Jerry Justice, administrative aide for Clackamas County and lobbyist against the proposal for Schumacher and Groener, said Tuesday that although there is no home rule charter in the county, one could be established to wrestle the issue away from the legislature.

However, Brown said the bill has an excellent chance of passage. "After the hearing Monday and after visiting in towns throughout the county, I've found that the people feel strongly in favor of the districting proposal."

Under the bill, the board would be increased to five members, each elected from a district.

Justice, on the other hand, said the districting proposal would create some problems in the county. He said that because only one of the commissioners would be from a rural district, such rural areas would be underrepresented on the board.

"At least now people have the ability to go to any one of the three commissioners and say, 'I vote for you or I vote against you.' " Justice said.

"With single-member districting, commissioners could do the political thing and just take care of the folks in the area where their names appear on the ballot."

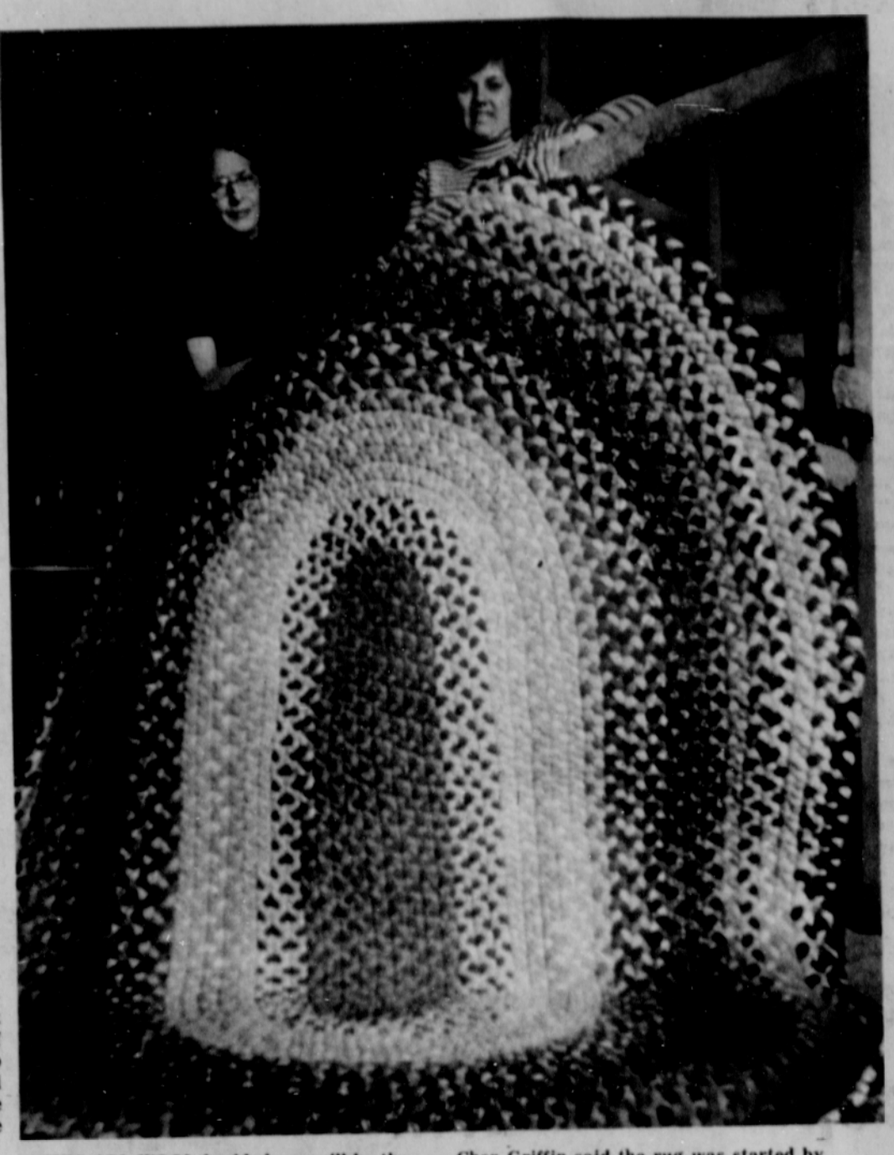
In his proposal, Brown also suggests that each of the five commissioners be assigned as head of a county department, thereby increasing visibility and accountability to constituents.

"I feel that we need five commissioners in order to efficiently carry out the many public services needed by our rapidly growing county. And I feel that we need one commissioner who will be particularly knowledgeable about each of the five areas of Clackamas County and who will be directly accessible and politically responsible to the residents of each area," the senator said.

At Monday's meeting, an unofficial survey conducted by Brown revealed that 66 of 70 person favored his legislation. Fourteen of the 17 persons who testified on the proposal favored it, with just two opposed and one undecided.

The crux of the supporting testimony contended that the current commission is not responsive to the voters, especially persons in rural areas.

Justice, however, said passage of the measure would not guarantee increased rural representation. "Neither system guarantees rural representation on the board. It's not inconceivable that in the Northeast area (of the county) people could find themselves with a commissioner who is anxious to see a lot more development in Damascus or other rural areas."



THIS ALL-WOOL braided rug will be the prize of someone attending the Hoodland Women'Club Serenade in Spring dance on Friday. Club members are Lois Rice and Char Griffin said the rug was started by club members about two years ago. Vi Collier, Florence Hoffman and Mrs. Rice were the main craftsmen in the project.

Serenade in Spring slated Friday

The Hoodland Women's Club will be holding a "Serenade in Spring" dance on Friday, April 29, in ZigZag.

The dance will feature live music and tickets will be on sale at the door or from members.

The evening festivities will begin at 9 p.m. and will be held at the Hoodland Park Building, south off Highway 26 on Salmon River Road.

Welches levy proposed

The Welches School District Board Monday night approved a $306,988 proposed levy which will go before district voters May 24.

The district, which does not have a tax base, must put a levy before voters each year. The proposed levy is an increase from this year's levy of $292,922, according to District Supt. Jack Callaghan.

The total propsed budget for the 1977-78 fiscal year is for $542,098—up from this year's budget of $498,688.

"It's a very small increase," said Callaghan, adding that the board has made the budget as tight as possible while still making it possible to maintain quality district programs.

Callaghan said the Welches district will not get as much extra financial support from the State of Oregon as some other districts in the state.

"It's going to be minimal," he said. "We're not going to luck out like some districts."

The projected tax rate per $1,000 true cash value under the proposed budget would be close to $3, Callaghan said. This year's rate per $1,000 was $2.89.

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Opening Events

Thursday, April 21st
Tom & Catherine's honey tasting 11 - 3

Friday, April 22nd,
Rachel will demonstrate the Cuisinart Food processor 11 - 3

Saturday, April 23rd,
Virginia Mahaffay will serve hors d'oeuvres prepared with her herb blends, 11 - 3

Any questions
666-8495

Ham dinner Saturday

THE ANNUAL ham dinner at Cottrell Grade School will be held on Saturday, April 23, from 5 to 8 p.m. Chairman for the event is Lois Swanson, who will be assisted by kitchen chairman Barbara Buss and ticket chairman Lorraine Lloyd. Homemade rolls, pies, cake and coffee are on the menu. Proceeds go for books, physical education equipment, and other school needs. There will be family rates for tickets.

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Christian men hold breakfasts

A Christian businessmen's group has invited any interested men to join them for 6:30 a.m. prayer breakfast meetings on Tuesday at T.J.'s Restaurant.

According to Lewis DePro, one of the organizers of the breakfast, the men have been meeting for several years for a time of sharing and reading from a modern translation of the Bible.

Approximately 5-12 men have regularly attended the sessions, which are non-denominational.

"We'd like to encouage more to come," DePro said.

DePro also said that some laymen in the Sandy area have organized with a Bible discussion at the Sandy Senior Center Mondays from 10-11 which is open to both men and women senior citizens.

Recently, the senior citizen Bible discussion has focused on the Letters of John in the New Testament.

For more information, call DePro at 668-6558.