

Agencies pool resources to upgrade Highway 26

The Hoodland Chamber of Commerce has long been active in promoting highway improvements on the mountain, but a meeting held last Friday at Timberline Lodge may expand that role and include other public and private entities in the campaign.

The interagency meeting was called by the Hoodland Chamber's Highway Committee, with Keith Petrie, manager of Multitorpor Ski Bowl, serving as chairman.

Attending the meeting were representatives of the Bend, Madras, Sandy and North Clackamas Chambers of Commerce; of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation; of United Grocers; of the U.S. Forest Service; of Systems 99, a trucking firm, and of the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Petrie said numerous other agencies expressed interest in the project by letter and may attend a second meeting planned for mid-spring when more information about the area's highway

system will be available.

"Right now we're an ad hoc committee," Petrie said. "We're just in the talking stage." But the group is ready to take a more active stance in the future to work for highway improvements, if that is what their studies indicate is needed.

"Basically, this is a group from the private sector which feels it might have to take the leadership in getting the highways improved," Petrie explained.

"We realize that with the new administration, highway funding on the federal and state levels may be more restricted," Petrie said. "If we want any highway improvements made, it may be up to us to prove our case."

The businessman said, "I hate to call it a political action committee, but that may be just what it boils down to." Many areas around the state need highway improvements, he said, but "we don't see that much money coming down the pike now. It may depend on

which community makes the best case."

The businesses and agencies approached about the project were those who rely heavily on trucking and tourism. Petrie said their hopes for Highway 26 are "to bring it up to the standard where it can handle not only our existing level of traffic but what we know is coming due to growth."

Some growth predictions for the Mt. Hood corridor forecast a population of 20,000 within a decade, compared to approximately 6,000 residents at present.

Petrie said the group had not defined target areas of concern on the highway; he said that step would be taken later, after the various agencies and business decided whether to undertake the project.

The next step is to await the results of a study undertaken by the Portland engineering firm CH2M, retained by the Mt. Hood Recreation Association to analyze highway data "from the view-

point of the private sector," Petrie said.

"That could be different than the way the top government agencies might look at it," he continued. Enough of those data should be available to allow the group to make some decisions at a meeting in late March or early April.

The Hoodland Chamber has worked to achieve several highway improvements within its service area, including left turn lanes off Highway 26 at Welches Road and Salmon River Road, and a brake check and runaway truck ramp near Government Camp.

Petrie said that further improvements could be "vital to us." He explained that the U.S. Forest Service has considered restricting all further development on the mountain until the highway capacity is increased.

"Highway 26 is the major highway over the Cascades in terms of use, both recreational and commercial trucking," he said.

One of the assignments given during

last Friday's meeting was to Donna Corner, who attended from the Bend Chamber of Commerce. She was asked to contact the eastern Oregon region of the state Highway Department to find out "what is on the boards for improvement over there," Petrie said.

One significant factor in future highway use is the increased use of triple trailers by the trucking industry because of the high cost of fuel, Petrie pointed out. The impact of the larger rigs will have to be analyzed, he said.

Highway 26 is not the only road to be targeted by the group, however. The businessman said Highway 35, from Hood River to the Mt. Hood summit, and Highway 212, which connects Interstate 205 with Highway 26, will also be studied.

Petrie said the state presently has a six-year plan for highway improvements, with widening of Highway 26 from the Brightwood Junction to Zigzag scheduled for 1984.

He said the highway department plans to wait until after the current legislative session ("when they know what funds they have to work with.") to reevaluate the plan.

At that time the department will ask for public input, Petrie said. "That's probably when we'll make our first push," he predicted. "We'll also ask them to go clear to Rhododendron with the four-lane."

Petrie said that would be the most economical approach, since cutting the four-lane highway off at Zigzag would leave a mile between the two communities with two-lane roadway. "They'll just have to come back later and widen that one mile," he said.

Petrie referred to a similar group in southwestern Oregon which was "pretty successful" in achieving highway improvements. "As always, it's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease," he said.



Photos by Mark Floyd

The building of a Greenhouse

It may not be the best looking greenhouse in the world and it would probably make a professional builder cringe, but the newly constructed building on the Sandy High property has a lot of things going for it.

For one thing, it was built and designed by teacher Les Geren and his horticulture class. It will also provide the school with a 100-foot indoor classroom and laboratory. It is actually a fairly sturdy structure and, since it isn't cemented into the ground, it doesn't have to pass code.

But most important, the price was right.

Many of the materials were on hand and the labor, Geren's class, certainly didn't cost much. In fact, the whole project was budgeted for about \$600, where the actual market price of such a building would run into the thousands.

It took two or three weeks to construct, first laying the foundation boards, then setting up the overhead supports. Foul weather postponed a few of the workdays, but not many. You have to be hardy to take a Geren class.

Fair weather was needed for the last step, however, which was laying in the plastic cover. Most of that was accomplished Tuesday.

Heaters have been installed and the greenhouse is nearly ready for use. It will provide a large, handy place for SUHS classes to grow plants and expand the students' learning.

And the construction of the greenhouse was an education in itself.



SUHS students put on the finishing touches of their new greenhouse, hanging plastic (top). One of the first steps was to weld the support frames into shape (above). The inside of the greenhouse (left) sagged in the morning, but was pulled taut by Monday afternoon. Teacher and project coordinator Les Geren (far left) reaches for nails.

Welches School problems near a solution

Some of the construction problems with Welches School's new addition appear to be nearing solutions, according to reports given the board by architect Richard Gessford during last Thursday night's regular board meeting.

Gessford reported that the building had been "turned back over to the contractor" after a prolonged work stoppage while alleged construction deficiencies were investigated.

Among the problems analyzed was a finish on the concrete floors which an independent engineer hired by the board called "the worst I've seen."

Gessford said during last week's meeting that a latex concrete product had been tested which he and the contractor, Glynbrook Construction of Salem, found satisfactory.

The product is pumped onto the uneven floors in a liquid state, Gessford explained, rather than the semi-solid state in which concrete is poured. This produces a level surface much more easily.

After the latex material was poured, "we put it a straight-edge on it, and it looked like a pancake," Gessford said. "It's a fine product."

Gessford expressed enthusiasm about the solution presented by the product and praised its strength and superior bonding properties.

Solutions to other problems with the new building are now being discussed only in executive sessions of the board, which are not open to the public and about which reporters cannot write.

This is necessary, board members explain, because of the possibility of future litigation when the time comes to determine liability for repairs and corrections.

During last week's meeting, Ed Burke, a constituent who attended the meeting, urged the board to consider ways to relieve District Superintendent Ken Blackburn of most of the pressure resulting from the building project.

Burke asked the board if it is proper for the school administrator to have to get involved in the building program. "It's been the perception in the community that this might have been a problem," he said.

Board chairman Don Thornberg pointed out that Blackburn would ultimately oversee the building after completion. But Burke objected, "The construction of that albatross over there has gotten increasingly complex."

He suggested that the school board direct Fred Carlson, the project supervisor, to route all his reports and inquiries through the board chairman.

The board approved a one-year contract with district teachers involving a 10 percent increase in salaries, and adopted a revised policy to deal with handicapped students.

Officials seek information on bank incident

A Molotov cocktail, thrown at the Clackamas County Bank in Wemme during the weekend, caused little damage, according to Hoodland Fire Chief Don Armintrout.

Authorities are seeking information on the incident, however.

"We feel it happened sometime during the weekend," Armintrout said. "The bank was closed Monday, so it could have been then. They threw it at a window, but it was plate glass and didn't break." There was some damage to the window siding and the wall.

Anyone with information regarding the incident is urged to call the Hoodland Fire Department at 622-3256 or deputy Ray Miller of the Clackamas County Sheriff's Department at 665-8444.