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The youngest rider led them all Saturday, as 5-year-old Nikki Johnson, inset, raised the most money in pledges for the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in the bike-a-thon under sunny skies at Mountain Shadow Estates, near Kelso School. Doug Hooper, in the background above pushing his bicycle, finished the 20-mile maximum, despite a tire blowout in his 19th mile.

Photos by Dan Dillon



Tax limiting initiatives stir concern

by DAN DILLON

(First in a series.)

Property tax rates in Oregon jumped more than 20 percent from 1981 to 1982, according to the Oregon Taxpayers Association.

Property taxes levied in Clackamas County jumped a whopping 30.1 percent, while assessed valuations jumped 13 percent.

Officials at the Clackamas County Assessor's office say they have had more challenges to assessments this year than any year in the past.

To combat the rising tax rates, a number of initiative petitions have sprung up around the state seeking to limit property taxes. One of the more drastic of those, circulated by the Oregon Taxpayers Association, would limit the amount collectable to 1 1/2 percent of the assessed valuation and roll back assessments to July 1, 1979-80 tax year.

While some agencies may be able to meet such cutbacks with increased fees or outside aid, some agencies re-

ly totally on property tax for their livelihood. One of those is the Sandy Fire District.

Sandy Fire Chief Bob Rathke doesn't like to talk about the possibility of the 1 1/2 percent limitation until it is closer to reality, but the threat that such an initiative raises is real to the district.

"The worst possible case" is a 30 percent reduction in the district's budget, he said, and a reduction in the amount of services the district provides.

By law, the fire district is required to go to a patron's house only when there is a fire. Medical and first-aid calls are left up to the discretion of individual fire districts.

"Except for going to your house and putting out your fire, the other things we're just not going to be able to do," he said.

Sandy's board has seen fit to provide the medical services and the public response has been overwhelming. Currently, Rathke said, 64 percent of the district's runs are

medical-related.

"If you're talking about reducing runs, that's something you have to look at," he said. "As I read (the initiative), this is what it would mean, but until the attorney general issues an opinion, everything is such a guess.

"I don't like to go overboard." That could leave medical and first-aid attention on a "pay for services" basis. State statute currently prohibits fire districts from such practices.

The rollback to the 1979-80 tax year would have a drastic effect of the local fire department. That year, the district's budget jumped from approximately \$250,000 to some \$500,000 as the district began implementation of its comprehensive plan.

The district passed a six-year tax base and Rathke anticipates the district will be able to accomplish that.

The money that is tied up in the tax base and the comprehensive are geared for long-term commitments:

remaining an all-volunteer unit, improved training for volunteers and public education.

Those commitments have paid off. Rathke is proud of the district's training program, calling it one of the best in the state. A hydrant maintenance program and good turnouts for alarms have all had their effect on local residents' pocketbooks already.

Sandy's fire insurance rating is a 5. That means the city enjoys the best residential rating it can get. Lower ratings apply only to the commercial sector.

With the reduced budget, one possibility is an affect on the fire insurance rating, Rathke said.

"Public education things would definitely be affected," he said, eliminating inspections and work in fire safety education in local schools.

(Next week: The effect of a 1 1/2 percent property tax limitation on city services.)

Lawsuit hits developer over sales practices

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

A multiple-plaintiff suit has been filed against American Guaranty Life Insurance Company and Welches developer Carl Bright.

The suit charges that misrepresentations were made about sewer assessments that pertained to land sales at Rippling River in Welches. Five individuals and two Oregon corporations filed the \$210,069.94 suit alleging that American Guaranty and Bright willfully misrepresented facts about the Hoodland Service District's sewer treatment plant while selling lots at Rippling River prior to 1980, which "constitute violations of the Oregon Unlawful Trade Practices Act."

Bright was subsequently appointed to the Hoodland Service District's budget committee in 1980 by the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners.

The plaintiffs allege that Bright told prospective buyers that lots in the subdivision "would not be subject to assessment for the sanitary sewer system or the cost of constructing the sewer treatment plant and sewer lines except for a sewer connection charge."

The suit, which was filed in circuit court in Multnomah County on Feb. 12, 1981, says the plaintiffs were furnished with a copy of the subdivision's Public Report which had been filed with the Oregon Real Estate Division. That action is required by state law.

The report, dated March 28, 1978, "contains representations that... American Guaranty would pay in cash the cost of all on-site improvements, except that lots served by sewers would be subject to a connection fee."

The plaintiffs charge that Bright and American Guaranty "willfully failed to disclose" that American Guaranty did not intend to pay the full cost of constructing the sewer system.

They also claim that the company had no intentions of paying the federal share in the event a federal grant was not obtained to pay a portion of the construction cost.

After "failure to disclose these facts," according to the complaint, coupled with the representations in the Public Report and statements by Bright, which "were false and misleading," each of the plaintiffs purchased single-family residential lots at Rippling River.

The suit alleges that the plaintiffs "did not learn of the falsity of the defendants' representations" until June 1980 when they were notified by the service district that their lots were being assessed for the new sewer facilities.

A Oct. 11 trial date has been set. Spokesmen for American Guaranty, president James Anderson and company attorney Milfred Ford, were unavailable for comment.

Postal service takes plan to council

The Sandy City Council gets its first chance to voice an opinion on the United States Postal Service's plan to relocate its Sandy operation.

The Postal Service will ask the council to approve its conditional use permit at a meeting this Monday, June 7, at 7:30 p.m. at Sandy City Hall.

Last Thursday, the local Design Review Board gave its conceptual approval for the building to be built at 17590 Wolf Drive, behind scenic

fruit company.

Since the Postal Service made its intentions known the council has not had an opportunity to speak out on the relocation. City staff sent a list of requests for the federal agency to consider in its site selection, but the council had no official word in the matter, other than endorsing the idea.

May 5, the Sandy Planning Commission recommended the new post office be located at the Wolf Drive

site. That action came after two sites were presented for consideration—the other being near Tupper Park.

Michael McKeel, who submitted the Tupper Park site, has indicated to city officials that he will hold off on his conditional use permit request until final action is completed on the Wolf Drive site.

Thursday, the Design Review Board approved the site plan and structure with the stipulation that its

recommendation is for earth-tone brick facing on three sides and continuous lap cedar siding on the north side, with the alternative of continuous lap cedar siding on all four sides. The cedar will be stained an earth tone compatible with the brick's color.

Postal Service officials will submit the landscaping plan at a later date. The Board stipulated that it was to be adequately landscaped with buffering where appropriate.

Sandy firm gears up for solar panels

by DAN DILLON

Harnessing the sun's energy to aid the wood products industry is about to give a shot in the arm to the local economy.

Employees at North American Dry Kiln & Energy Systems, Inc. are gearing up for the day when they will see production begin again in the old Timberline Trailer building in Sandy's Industrial Park.

The company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Globe Machine of Tacoma, Wash., expects to begin some manufacturing within 60 days, according to sales manager Dusty Allison.

"It's our intent to produce high quality dry kilns, solar-powered kilns, and energy systems, such as boilers and combustion systems," Allison said.

Eight people have been at North American Dry Kiln in engineering and sales for the past six months. "warming up the tires," Allison said, during the legal entanglement left when the building's former occupant, Hildebrand North America, filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Sept. 11, 1981.

Hildebrand had set up shop in Sandy Industrial Park in February 1981, for production of lumber drying kilns, wood waste burners, formaldehyde treatment chambers and microprocessor control systems.

The firm employed approximately 100 persons at the time it shut its doors in late August.

Allison anticipates that the firm will employ 25-50 employees when production begins.

The company is in the research-and-engineering stage, looking at the solar panels and a method to harness wave power on the open seas to bring

electricity to Third World nations.

Recently, engineers at the plant have been experimenting with solar panels, primarily for industrial use, that could have a dramatic effect on the wood processing industry.

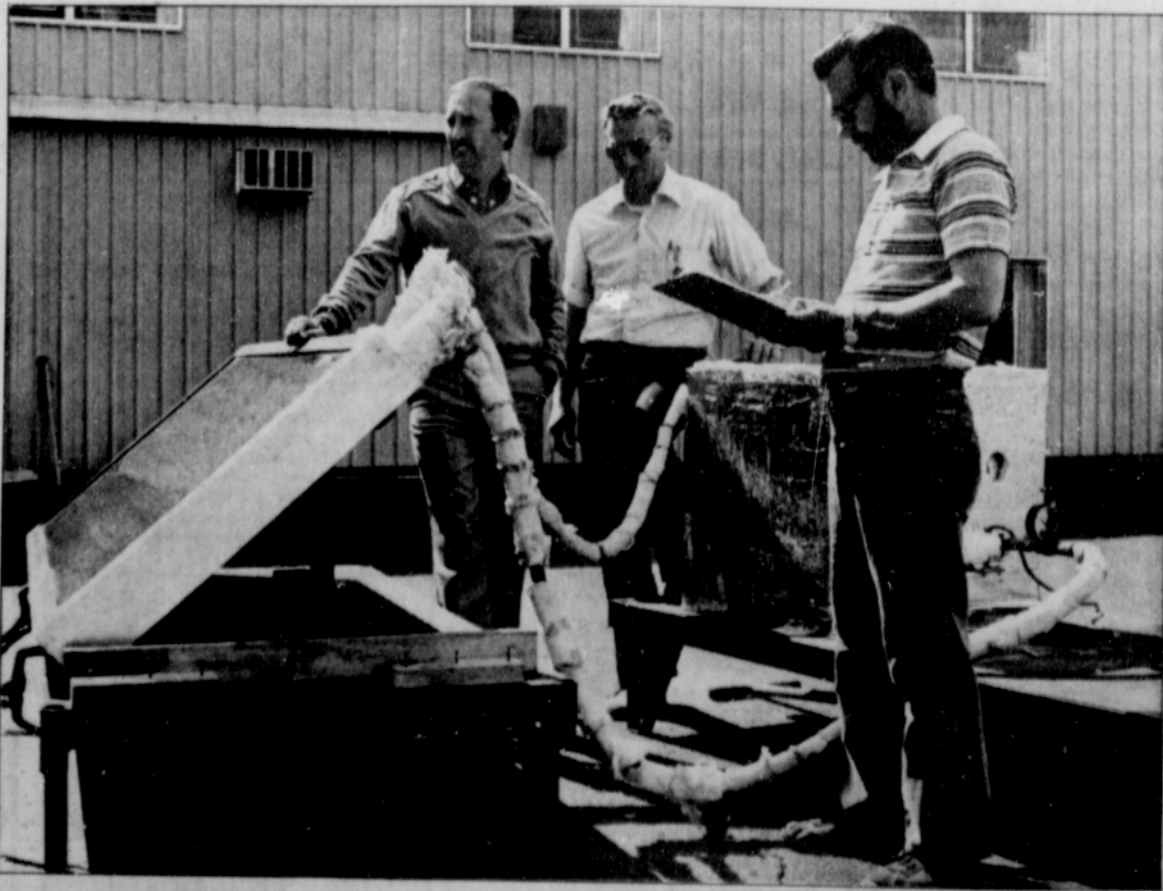
The solar panel testing has included copper tubing and a rubber mat finish called Sola-Rol. With the black rubber mat finish, the firm found a 25 percent gain in efficiency over the copper tubing design.

The next step should see an even greater jump in efficiency.

North American Dry Kiln & Energy Systems will begin tests shortly with four-inch Pyrex tubing. "The latest state of the art," according to works manager Dean Arnold, will be self-tracking as it follows the sun, thanks to a highly-polished aluminum backing that will heat the tubing.

While it is the most expensive alternative, Arnold said, "the return is going to far outweigh the cost."

"We'd like to offer the solar panel concept to the industrial sector, as well as the private sector," Allison said. The concept will be mainly heat-producing this time, rather than generating storable energy.



Sales manager Dusty Allison, chief engineer Clark Hofmann and works manager Dean Arnold inspect a solar panel that they hope can be adapted for use with kilns in the lumber industry. The trio hopes to have production underway in the next two months at North American Dry Kiln & Energy Systems, Inc. in Sandy's Industrial Park.

Photo by Dan Dillon

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