



The Sandy Post

Vol. 72 No. 42

SANDY, OREGON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1982

(USPS 481-180)

Single Copy 25¢

Officials mull over Measure 3's possibilities

by DAN DILLON

Local city, fire and school officials are preparing to make do with less.

While voters wait for the opportunity Nov. 2 to reduce their property taxes through Ballot Measure 3, local officials are scrambling to be ready for the shortfalls the 1.5 percent limitation will bring.

"A lot of people aren't aware of what it will do," said city librarian Sue Newlands. "It's fair to vote yes, but it's going to have repercussions."

Ballot Measure 3, a proposed constitutional amendment that would place limits on property taxes and restrict the authority of state and local governments to increase non-property taxes, has officials worried. But they are studying alternatives to be ready for the repercussions.

A statewide poll released earlier this week indicates an overwhelming support for the ballot measure.

"I know there is a general gloom among all libraries," Newlands said. "If we get 85 percent of what we got in 1979 from the city, it would hardly pay the utilities and staff. It's going to be bleak."

The 1.5 percent annual property tax increase could be overridden if higher taxes were necessary to provide any taxing district 85 percent of its 1979-80 total revenues. A district providing "essential services," such as Sandy Fire District, would be guaranteed 100 percent of its 1979-80 revenues.

"Our impact would be much worse than some because we have so many out-of-city users," Newlands said. The county library levy bases a major portion of its reimbursements on out-of-city use. Currently 75-80 percent of Sandy Public Library's patrons come from outside the city.

"I feel very strongly that for the amount of money being spent for library services, it's unique in offering a service in which somebody can, on their honor, walk in the door and take out \$300 to \$400 worth of materials simply as a public service," Newlands said.

Even with 100 percent of its 1979-80 revenue available as an "essential service," Sandy Fire Chief Bob

Rathke said the local fire district stands to face a 37 percent drop from its current budget. "Taking that much out has to effect everything we do," he said.

Rathke projects the district will lose up to two of its five paid firefighters. He is mulling the possibilities of what services will be available if Measure 3 is successful. Among the changes he is consider-

ing are a reduction in public service alarms, first-aid calls that are "non-life threatening" and waiting until there is a confirmed injury or pin-in at a vehicle accident before dispatching assistance.

Dispatching, 8-10 percent of the district's total budget, could undergo changes that, Rathke said, would mean "basically going to a second-best type system."

It sounds simple, the fire chief said, but the district has a "sophisticated" mutual aid system with adjacent fire districts. "Dispatching is a full-time job," he said flatly.

The overall impact on the local fire district could be lessened by the foresight of the district board.

"Our position has always been to plan for the future and maintain a

good, effective volunteer program," Rathke said. "But, we get a heckuva lot out of our volunteers. The question is how much longer we can ask it."

At 85 percent of its 1979-80 total revenue, the Sandy Elementary District stands to lose approximately \$290,000. While that is admittedly a "ballpark figure," Superintendent Clark Lund is certain the impact will be felt.

"Any way you look at it there will be a significant rollback on what we're able to do," he said.

The district which normally has prepared a budget calendar by now has postponed that move pending the outcome of the Nov. 2 election. It is studying a joint transportation program with other Sandy High School feeder schools to save money and Lund sees the day when other school functions could be consolidated among the area elementary school districts to avoid duplication of services.

"The bottom line," he said, "is the children, as we serve them, are going to be impacted." That could be in the form of higher classloads or cuts in instructional programs.

Despite the dire predictions, Lund feels that eventually the situation will be resolved at all levels around the state. In the interim, however, he foresees "a tremendous amount of chaos."



Sandy firefighters battle a blaze that swept through the home of the Melrose Singletons, 41093 SE Wildcat Mountain Road, when wiring sparked Sunday afternoon. Loss was estimated at \$65,000. Twenty-four Sandy firefighters

responded to the alarm with seven pieces of apparatus to battle the fire which had engulfed the home by the time the first truck was on the scene.

Photo by Dan Dillon

Council split over handling 3's problems

by DAN DILLON

The Sandy City Council is split over handling the possibility of Ballot Measure 3's passage.

On the one hand, the city should be prepared, but on the other, it argues, accepting its passage is a "defeatist attitude."

Councilor Jim Duff said Monday night the city should be ready to implement a plan of action immediately after the election.

Mayor Ruth Loundree feels there will be time after the election to sit down and resolve problems created by shortfalls. Councilor Deane Wesselink concurs, saying after the election will be the time to "take the bull by the horns."

"I feel we should have preliminary plans so that if (Ballot Measure 3) does go through, we can implement them immediately," Duff explained. If it goes through, we've got problems. I do say we can't sit back and take a hands-off posture."

The council was responding to a memorandum prepared by former city manager Roger Jordan that outlined effects Ballot Measure 3 would have on the local government if passed. Rather than make budget-cutting suggestions, Jordan left those steps up to the council.

In the memo, he indicated Sandy would lose nearly half its property tax monies if the measure is approved.

"If this should pass," Loundree said, "council is going to have to sit down and work out its own individual problems. I personally am not going to say yes or no to the way people should vote. After the election you have 30 days to sit up and burn the midnight oil getting next year's budget ready."

Wesselink isn't convinced people are aware of the measure's ramifications, but is willing to accept whatever result comes.

"I don't think people realize what they're getting into," he said. "But, if that's what people mandate us, I see no alternative but to take the bull by the horns and wrestle it."

"Reductions don't necessarily mean you're out of business," Wesselink said. "I'm here to figure out a way to make it go."

Lund blasts SUHS reading test results

Sandy Elementary District Superintendent Clark Lund has blasted accuracy and handling of a Sandy High School freshman test that suggests some feeder schools have reading program deficiencies.

"What was the high school's overall composite score on the students tested?" he asked, noting only highlights were lifted for attention.

Average test scores fluctuate through the grades of any school, Lund reminded.

The high school's test of 282 freshmen rated grade level reading skills, with a breakdown comparison of freshman readers based on where they'd attended grade school locally.

Former Sandy Elementary students recently scored reading skills in vocabulary at a 9.3 grade

average level and reading comprehension at a 7.9 grade level.

Some area feeder schools saw their former students score lower in the high school's Gates MacGinitie Reading Test, while others saw their former students score higher.

Former Bull Run students scored at an 11th grade reading level on the average.

Former Cottrell students were rated at a 9.2 grade level in reading comprehension and a 9.9 grade level in vocabulary.

Former Boring School students, however, were rated at a 6.7 grade level in reading comprehension and 9.0 grade level in vocabulary on the average.

Former Welches School students, however, were rated only at a 7.9 grade level in reading comprehen-

sion and 9.3 grade level in vocabulary on the average.

Sandy Elementary Schools Supt. Lund criticized the test as inconclusive and misleading.

"A testing analyst must keep in mind that when testing small sub-groups of a whole," he said, "resulting scores are subject to wide fluctuations (high or low) based on the performance of a very few within that small sub-group."

He asked what purpose the high school management group might have in "singling out" any given feeder district, other than pointing fingers of discredit.

"Is this scenario an administrative statement of justification in the high school's attempt to educate at the secondary level?" he asked.

Lund said Sandy Elementary

District seventh graders who are now Sandy High freshmen earlier scored at a year and a half above their grade level in reading comprehension in the same Gates MacGinitie test.

On the California Achievement Test the same test group scored even higher, while in the seventh grade.

When this same test group took the California Achievement Test in the eighth grade, they scored two full years ahead of their more recent test at Sandy High.

"This incomplete and inconclusive report," Lund said of the high school's Gates MacGinitie findings, "has done a great disservice to many who are directly involved. I can see no benefit in our 'umbrella district' setting fires at thresholds of its feeder districts."

Sandy High School Supt. Jack

Peters said his school didn't mean to use the freshmen test results to evaluate the feeder schools.

"We administered the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Level E, Form 1) Sept. 8, so we might have a better awareness of the general competency level of our students in the area of reading," Peters said.

He said test results proved "extremely helpful" in placing students in appropriate English classes and counseling them.

"It was not our intent to utilize the results as a means of making judgments on the feeder school programs," he said. "On the contrary, it is our desire to evaluate our own program in reading vocabulary and comprehension by re-testing those same 282 students in next September to see if gains have been made."

Rep. Smith claims

Federal freeze would pump up state economy



Rep. Denny Smith told the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce Tuesday that an across-the-board freeze would boost Oregon's economy.

U.S. Rep. Denny Smith, campaigning here Tuesday for a new Fifth District House seat, told the Sandy Chamber of Commerce an across-the-board freeze in federal spending could balance the budget and improve Oregon's economy.

"That's the best thing I can do to help Oregon's economy," said the Second District Republican who's jumping districts to oppose State Senator Ruth McFarland in a new district.

Smith, a newspaper executive, said a balanced national budget is entirely within grasp in a year and a half.

The former military pilot often criticized by his opponent for military spending votes said the C-5 cargo plane should not have been purchased, nor should the M-1 tank.

Smith said the space program, while paying its way in its own merits, holds new value for the nation in defense.

He affirmed his support of the president's Geneva peace meeting proposal to begin a bi-lateral nuclear arms freeze and reduction, "particularly for the European theatre."

Smith's Sandy visit, lighted by flood lamps from an entourage of press, focused on economic efforts, however.

"We've got to get the federal government out of the borrowing market and bring the mortgage in-

terest rate down to about 10 percent," he said.

He advocated annual audits of the Federal Reserve Board, but not shift in control to Congress.

"I'm not sure we can trust the Congress any more than the Federal Reserve Board," he said.

He side-stepped a question from Sandy's city planner on whether Economic Development Administration should continue to receive solid funding.

"I can't remember how I voted on EDA," he replied. "I can't give you a straight answer."

"I think government sometimes should stay out of these areas," he said of economic development efforts, "because we get into pork-barreling. We in the Northwest here have a growing economy."

He repeated his attack on Social Security System costs and called for fine-tuning, noting the System is losing \$19,000 per minute in its trust funds.

Entitlements, many for social programs, leaves 80 percent of the federal budget "uncontrollable by definition," Smith said of his budget-balance freeze hopes.

"That's why I think the freeze is something we have to do, without cutting anyone's program. We should be able to do that with the political situation the way it is," he said, adding the defense fund should share in the freeze.

"We're not short of revenues,"

he said of the national budget.

"Our professional politicians over the years have tried to convince us that we can't balance the national budget. That's not true. We can do it, and it would be easy. That's with a freeze."

Ceiling on the national debt has been raised from \$19.5 billion two years ago to recent authorization with the present \$750 billion budget to as high as \$1 trillion, 200 billion.

To cover losses, the federal government most recently agreed to borrow another \$100 billion in new money, "just to keep the operation running," Rep. Smith said.

He said spending growth has been cut and government regulations decreased during the current administration, "but not nearly enough."

Smith said there's still too much paperwork in government, too much tax and too many business regulations.

He said Americans are consuming oil more conservatively these days to reduce national dependence on OPEC oil, but advised that gap should broaden even more.

"I don't mean to sound anti-oil," Smith said, "because they deserve a profit."

He said oil companies need more incentive to explore new fields and diversify into other energy resources.

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