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SUHS board fires superintendent

by DAN DILLON

The Sandy Union High School District board voted unanimously Monday night to terminate Superintendent Jack Peters' contract.

The action will become effective June 30, midway through a two-year contract negotiated last year.

"I am shocked and surprised by the action you have taken and I will consult legal counsel," the superintendent told the board after the vote, noting he had received no forewarning of an impending dismissal.

"I have a contract I believe is valid through June 30, 1984 and I intend to honor this contract," Peters said.

Tuesday at the school, staff and student reaction mirrored Peters' shock and surprise.

"You couldn't tell if it was an air of sadness or numbness," said Principal John McMahan. "It was a toss-up. Nobody expected it. Nobody had any forewarning."

"Jack is showing us 'Carry on,'" he added.

McMahan doesn't think the firing will have a significant effect on the current budgeting process. "Jack was good at what he did. If you're good at what you do, it'll go on without you," he said.

"As for voter reaction, 'it's tough to say,'" McMahan said. "I would hope that voters would vote on behalf of students. The school will carry on. I think we'll get our election."

The board's termination vote came following an executive session during which board members met with Peters, apparently to discuss the superintendent's performance.

"It is not the intent of this board to discredit you or defame you about your professional abilities," board chairman Wayne Johnson told Peters after the vote.

"The board feels at this time there is a need for a change and I think that is the sole motivation for the board this evening."

Tuesday Johnson explained further the board's position. "It was not the board's intent to discredit Dr. Peters as a professional educator. We just felt that to maintain the educational



Dr. Jack Peters

and academic credibility in our community, we need a change in leadership," he said.

"Sometimes the climate in a district changes and we need to make a change to fit that climate," the school board chairman said.

Johnson stressed that there is "absolutely no animosity, no reference to his being irresponsible or those kinds of things" in the board's decision.

With one year remaining on Peter's contract Johnson is confident a settlement may be reached.

The search for a replacement will begin immediately with assistance from the Oregon School Board Association. The organization has nationwide contacts that the local board will be able to draw from and utilize in advertising the position.

Peters, 57, came to the local high school district as superintendent in 1977 after nine years as assistant superintendent in the Coos Bay School District. He replaced Joe DeMarsh.

While at SUHS, Peters initiated parent-teacher conferences, staff involvement in the hiring process and evaluation, McMahan said, noting some changes during the superintendent's tenure.

House fire claims two lives

by DAN DILLON

Local fire officials are re-emphasizing the need for smoke detector maintenance in the wake of a fire Saturday that claimed two lives on Sandy Heights Road.

Dead are Joseph Allen Radovich, 22, a resident of the house, and Cheryl Lynn McKinney, 21, of Portland. They apparently died from smoke inhalation when a small fire broke out in the living room of a rental house at 38100 Sandy Heights Road during the night.

The house was equipped with two smoke detectors, according to fire investigators, but neither had operable batteries.

"It's a tragic lesson but I think everyone should take it to heart," said Sandy Fire Marshal Jim Gallagher. "If you don't have a detector, get one. If you do have one, test the batteries at least once a month."

"A human life is worth a lot more than a buck and a half battery. Smoke detectors never sleep."

The fire, which Gallagher estimates smoldered for nearly two hours before the alarm at 7:49 a.m., started when an extension cord broke down and ignited the fabric on a couch. "The cords were too light to land the load of the electric heater" in the victims' bedroom, Gallagher said.

The foam rubber in the couch smoldered, releasing a "heavy, toxic smoke," he said. "The whole house was just completely charred with black smoke."

The victims apparently became aware of the situation at approximately 6:15 a.m. and tried to escape through a bedroom window. However, plastic sheeting covered the outside of the window. A small hole, possibly made by a finger, was found in the plastic.

"Something woke them up," Gallagher said. "It appears they tried to escape but, because of the heavy concentration of smoke from the foam rubber, they didn't make it."

The victims were found on the floor under the bedroom window.

The fire itself was contained in the living room by firefighters within eight minutes of the alarm and caused an estimated \$10,000 damage to the building.

The fire was reported by Beverly Stone who lives in nearby Skyline



Photo by Dan Dillon

Sandy firefighter Art Blaisdell sprays a mist of water over damaged contents of the home where two perished in an early-morning blaze Saturday.

Mobile Villa. Her husband, Roger, tried to wake the occupants when he saw smoke coming from the home but was unsuccessful.

When Mrs. Stone called '911,' the lines were dead, Gallagher said. She called the operator and reported the fire. Portland Fire District put out the alarm over a statewide network. A Clackamas

dispatcher heard it and notified Clackamas County Communications, whose network receiver was not operating.

Gallagher had not traced the source of that problem by early this week.

"We feel pretty comfortable, had the smoke detectors been operating, those deaths might not

have occurred," said Sandy Fire Chief Bob Rathke.

"The fire never got to them," said Gallagher. "Some 70 percent of your fire fatalities die that way—smoke, not fire."

The incident marked the first fire fatalities in the Sandy Fire District since 1974.

Water company seeks Wemme expansion

The Salmon Valley Water Company has filed an application that would expand its service area by approximately 1,200 acres in the Wemme area.

Next Thursday the Portland Metropolitan Area Local Boundary Commission will consider the proposal in a hearing at 7 p.m. at the Multnomah County Courthouse in Portland.

If approved, customers who choose the service will pay a \$900 service connection fee, an annual \$180 service charge and an additional \$15 monthly charge for water, according to an engineering report submitted with the application.

Alan Jensen, co-owner of the water company, said fears of forced hook-ups are unfounded. "No one would ever be required to hook up to anything," he said.

He added that there would be no additional taxes for residents in the area west, which is west of Arrah Wana Boulevard.

"All of this doesn't mean we're putting down lines immediately," he said. "There is no time line—until someone is willing to pay."

He said the request for service had been with the water company for nearly a year, but preliminary

studies have delayed the application until now.

Ken Martin, executive officer of the boundary commission, agreed that the company "could only charge for their services and did not have the power to tax."

The additional service territory will include some portions of Wemme, Wildwood and Brightwood areas. Currently 155 residents are in the area. The population is expected to grow quickly, however.

Two new developments are planned for the Cedar Ridge area. Brightwood Glen, a 339-unit subdivision was OK'd by Clackamas County

Commissioners Nov. 1. The 185-unit Alderwood Mobile Home Subdivision was approved Jan. 13.

Also included is the Bureau of Land Management's Wildwood Park, which has its own water system.

Excluded are the areas currently served by the Brightwood and Mountain Air Park Water Companies, and Timberline Rim.

Martin said the BLM's park property and 410 acres of transitional timber lands has been withdrawn from the allocated territory and boundaries are being re-drawn.

New maps of the proposed area

have been requested from the county to show updated zoning information."

The extension of Salmon Valley Water Company's boundaries occupies a portion of the Mt. Hood Water Loop Water District. Martin said there is no conflict between the water company and the water district. For a conflict to occur, the district would have to have been providing water services. Since the Mt. Hood Loop's formation the 1930's, Martin said, there have been a few assessments, but never delivery of a drop of water in a bucket to anyone.

"They had grandiose plans on how they were gonna provide a water service, but they never got far," said Martin.

The Salmon Valley Water Company has had no such problems. Since its formation in 1968, the district has grown to serve nearly 600 customers, Jensen said. The company draws its water from wells and delivers it untreated, "just the way it comes from the ground."

Once the water company's new territory is approved, Martin said the boundary commission will take steps to dissolve the district as an entity.

Innovation guides manufacturer's quick growth

by DAN DILLON

When officials at a southeast Portland manufacturing firm announced a plant relocation to Sandy Industrial Park they weren't prepared for the local reception.

"We were inundated," reported John Knapp, Bison Industries president. "I think the quality of the labor force here is excellent."

The response from job-seekers, without notice of hirings, was so great from a small newspaper article that the company had to put up a sign advising that no applications were being taken so normal work procedures could be followed.

"I can't imagine any better place for us to be at the moment," Knapp continued. When the need for a move from the company's 8,000-square-foot shop became apparent, Knapp scouted sites from Vancouver, Wash., to Wilsonville, but his thoughts kept returning to the former home of Timberline Trailers in Sandy—the first location he looked at.

Now the eight-acre site is the home of one of the more innovative

manufacturers of refuse disposal equipment in the United States. "All the innovation is in the West," Knapp said.

A great deal of it has come from the offices of 2 1/2 year-old Bison Industries. Considering the economic difficulties, the firm's track record speaks for itself—projected sales for 1983 exceeding \$1 million, up from \$250,000 during the first year of operation. That came despite a location in the Pacific Northwest, the smallest regional market for refuse disposal equipment in the United States.

The smaller, side-loaders have several advantages over traditional rear-loading trucks, Knapp noted. The proximity of the loading place to the cab keeps the driver close to the dumper. "That conserves physical effort which is then realized in more collections per shift," Knapp noted.

Rising fuel, equipment, labor and safety-related costs in the industry have become "ingredients for some very important changes in the way garbage is collected in the United States," Knapp said.

The small six-yard trucks, with a 4,500-pound capacity, that Bison Industries manufactures also fit well with a "satellite concept" where smaller trucks make collections then transfer refuse to a larger, conventional truck for a trip to the dump. "Specialized equipment for specific jobs," Knapp calls it.

Along with the small six-yard side-loader, the company will host an open house in February to introduce the first 12-yard side-loader in the business.

Fewer trips means energy conservation. Along those lines, the firm manufactures a dumpster which compacts trash, reducing the number of pick-ups necessary for service. It also constructs a recycling collection vehicle.

Bison Industries is working with Reynolds Aluminum to develop the first all-aluminum garbage truck. The lightweight vehicle would be a boost to both industries and typifies innovations Bison attempts.

"The smaller companies can get away with it," Knapp said. "Bigger companies don't innovate."



President John Knapp of Bison Industries demonstrates a dumpster that compacts trash, reducing the number pick-ups necessary.

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WEATHER

Extended Forecast: Showers Friday through Sunday with cooling temperatures. Chance of measurable precipitation 70 percent by Thursday. Highs, 40s. Lows, 30s to lower 40s. Precipitation: January Total: 5.03 inches; 0.12 inches above normal. 1983 Total: 5.03 inches; 0.12 inches above normal.