

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

Scott Newton, editor
Karinda Hedlund, advertising representative

Sheriff's office has earned support

A "yes" vote on the Clackamas County sheriff's levy on May 19 is crucial to the uninterrupted operation of the sheriff's office.

The three-year serial levy would replace the one approved by voters in 1984. The tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed valuation would increase from \$1.20 to \$1.34.

An updated computer system and two positions have been eliminated from the levy following the unsuccessful March election. In March, voters rejected the sheriff's levy by 1,662 votes out of 61,780 cast.

The new computer system was important to the sheriff's office and taking it out — for a savings of \$750,000 — was a difficult decision for Sheriff Bill Brooks.

A good argument could be made for the computer, which was part of a planned update. Clackamas County uses its computers to analyze crime and schedule patrols based on patterns of crime. The new patrolling method took effect in 1986, two years after the computer system was installed, and the results have been dramatic.

Deputies initiated 8 percent more investigations into suspicious circumstances last year, leading to a 30 percent increase in arrests. The additional investigations were made possible by the efficient scheduling of patrols.

The computer is used by the sheriff's office, municipal police departments, the district attorney's office and the corrections division to the tune of about 300,000 transactions a month.

The scheduling of patrols and the use of the computer are significant because those are areas in which the progress of the sheriff's office is evident. Indeed, it is hard to criticize a law enforcement agency that shows such a dramatic increase in arrests.

Statistics show property crimes increased slightly in 1986, while crimes against people dropped.

Despite the importance of the computer, Brooks was not willing to risk the wrath of voters on May 19 by including the updated equipment in the budget. What the public sees is deputies patrolling neighborhoods. Wisely, no reductions have been made in patrols.

The volume of work performed by the sheriff's office is mind-boggling. In a year's time, deputies patrol 2 million miles and law enforcement officials investigate 13,148 cases and answer 44,069 calls for service.

The sheriff's office was funded by a partial levy beginning in 1976. It has operated on three-year levies approved in 1981 and 1984. The result has been a stable operation with a good reputation.

There has been some controversy over whether residents in cities within Clackamas County should be paying the serial levy. It could be argued that those people are already paying for law enforcement through municipal police agencies. The Board of Clackamas County Commissioners has appointed a committee to study the issue.

The boundary issue, however, should not deter voters from supporting the levy. Many people enjoy outdoor recreation in Clackamas County, ranging from skiing to fishing. While they are in those areas, protection is provided by the sheriff's office.

In addition, criminals do not pay heed to boundaries and the burglar who is in a rural area one night may be within a city's boundaries the next.

Sheriff's deputies also serve as backups for policemen in municipalities, especially in Sandy where the boundaries for a number of county patrol districts meet.

Solving the boundary problem will take some time. For now, the most important consideration in Sandy and the Mount Hood corridor is to keep the sheriff's office funded at its present level.

The sheriff's office now faces a potential crisis. If the sheriff's levy is rejected, layoffs would be necessary before emergency funding could be put in place.

Voters should keep the sheriff's office operating efficiently by supporting law enforcement at the polls.



Letters to the editor

District attorney seeks support

We as citizens of Clackamas County have an important decision to make on Tuesday, May 19. The sheriff's serial levy!

I hope the voters will support the levy as I do.

If the levy fails the sheriff's department will cease to exist for all intent and purpose. The jail, civil (service of legal process) and some administrative services will exist.

However, the sheriff's patrol car you see in your area and that responds to your calls when you are raped, burglarized or robbed, etc. will not be there.

If there is no serial levy there will be no sheriff's department as we know it today.

The sheriff's office does an excellent job with the money we give them each three years through the serial levy.

I for one want to know the sheriff's deputies are out there protecting us from the criminal element of our society.

Fourteen police agencies regularly submit cases to this district attorney's office. Of those 14 the sheriff's office is responsible for 53 percent of all cases submitted for prosecution.

If the serial levy fails, and there are no deputy sheriffs patrolling and investigating, the unincorporated areas will have less than one-third the law enforcement and the entire county will have less than two-thirds the law enforcement we currently have.

We have too much crime and too few officers now. I strongly urge the citizens of this county to vote for the sheriff's serial levy (Ballot Measure 3-9).

James W. O'Leary
district attorney
Clackamas County

robbery. County deputies covered calls and helped to contain crime scenes. There have been many other instances like this.

Consulting a map of Clackamas County reveals many interesting features such as Mount Hood; search and rescue activity there is the province of the Clackamas County sheriff's office and would be seriously hampered by loss of funding to the department.

Dammash State Mental Hospital in Wilsonville is another problem area. A long strip of southeast 82nd Avenue is patrolled by the county. Anyone who has driven 82nd at night can draw his or her own conclusions as to the effect of loss of police coverage there.

Coloring in the cities within Clackamas County that provide their own police protection shows a pattern reminiscent of the Old West; will it be safe to leave "Fort Canby" or "Fort Sandy" any longer? I don't think so.

So don't get mugged in South County, or have an auto accident on your Sunday drive to Mount Hood. Without a levy, the cavalry won't be coming next time.

Terry Griffiths
Deputy sheriff and
Clackamas County resident

about it? Recreation programs can help us fight that also. The intent of public leisure services is to provide opportunities for satisfying leisure for all segments of the population. How will we be able to do that in Sandy? We approved a tax base for this city in 1984. Now let's provide those services.

If the streets need to be repaired, then we need a gas tax. That would be a logical place to get additional revenue. But please, don't cut one of the very few areas that actually contribute significantly both to the individual well being and to overall healthy needs of this community.

Nanette Reber
chairwoman
Sandy Recreation Commission

Bus driver friend in need

The Sandy area should be very proud of the high quality of its bus drivers, especially Ralph Gibson.

Last Thursday, May 7, two other teachers and I took 30 Sandy High School students to Eugene for Foreign Language Day. About an hour from Eugene, quite far from any exit, we saw a bus stopped on the side of the road.

It looked as though one group had decided to take a rest stop in the beautiful sunshine. As we neared, however, Ralph commented that it was not an appropriate place to stop and we should check it out. When we stopped, we discovered that they had a flat tire and the driver had gone for help.

Although a number of us tried to flag down the nearly dozen other school buses that passed, not one stopped. Assessing the situation, Ralph decided how many extra students our bus could hold, gave directions to the other school's teachers and supervised the loading.

The Sandy area schools should be very proud to have such a driver as Ralph Gibson with a quick mind, experience and knowledge to spot that something was amiss and the compassion to do something about it.

Ruth Sherman,
teacher
Sandy High School

Programs aid well being

I am increasingly saddened by the direction Sandy seems to be moving. The most recent decision by the city of Sandy budget committee to cut recreation, community center and senior programs would eliminate over half of the programs we are now enjoying.

That includes basketball for both youth and adults, co-ed volleyball, after-school programs for children, craft classes, exercise classes and preschool programs for a total reduction of 80 percent.

The community center would see a 54 percent reduction and there would no longer be evening hours, turning away numerous Sandy organizations that utilize the space for meetings.

The senior program would be cut 48 percent. This program meets the needs of the aging through recreation and a wide range of services. With 600 participants in Sandy's recreation program and 400 in the senior program, we're telling one-third of Sandy's population we don't care about them.

The staff has done a wonderful job of planning and providing services and programs and we will lose those valuable people also.

Remember our city's recent youth crime problem and the strong action by our City Council to do something

you can be. A building block on whom others depend in a small town for a better America.

Oh yes, you vote conscientiously to help toward this end. Building for a future. You raise your family and they turn out to be good building blocks too.

You planted a community garden in them. Grown now, the years have gone spinning by. But where is your future now? You discover there is a place for you — the Sandy Senior Center. Here you find people of like-mind. There is fellowship, activities, trips to take, communal meals. Life takes on quality again. You can compare notes. They become your second family.

In the span of spinning years you have all grown in wisdom and grace, acquired a kind of beauty, a sense of humor, a sagacity that was not there when you were young.

But wait! Someone has pulled the plug. Fourteen people on a city budget committee will cut 50 percent of the funds needed to operate the senior center because they feel good, hard streets are more important than the quality of life for older people who have made their contribution?

I've got news for them, this segment of people are what life is all about! Don't take away the future seniors have worked so hard for — any future they have got left. They wear their years and wrinkles like badges of honor.

If you do, to paraphrase a line from "My Fair Lady," "Just you wait, budget men, just you wait."

We need the senior center fully funded. You will, too.

Have you ever watched the cherry blossoms wafting in the wind and thought, "How God spends himself for us." Seniors have spent themselves for you, too.

Dorothy G. Bernard
Sandy

Sandy Post letter policy

Letters to the editor should be typed, double-spaced and signed. An address and telephone number should also be provided, although only the name of the letter writer and the city or area he is from will be published.

Letter writers may also wish to include a title or office held if it is appropriate considering the subject matter of the letter.

The news deadline of noon Tuesday is also the deadline for letters to the editor.

Letters should be accurate, free of libelous remarks and in good taste. This newspaper attempts to publish all letters it receive it receives from area residents.

by Adam Kraft

Letters to the editor

Safety net just Band-Aid

Within two years under the safety net proposal, the gap between the have and the have not districts will have grown to such an extent that many students in Oregon will be denied their right to an equal education.

The 171 districts that have adequate tax bases will have increased their budgets by 12 percent while many of the 135 others will be forced to slice 20 percent from their budgets.

In districts like Sandy and Estacada that have already made severe cuts, it can't be done without drastically affecting the quality of education available to those children.

The truly ironic thing is that many of the "poorer" districts pay more in taxes and yet spend less on their students than many of those in the "rich" districts.

School taxes can vary statewide from \$253 to \$2,694 on a \$100,000 home. Per pupil spending can vary from \$2,000 to \$12,000.

Since some districts are poor in business, industry and state-owned forestry land (the components that make school taxes less for homeowners), those who can least afford it must pay the most.

The safety net will only make a bad situation worse. Slapping a Band-Aid on our wound without treating the affliction may hide our pain from Wall Street but will force this festering infection to only grow deeper thus guaranteeing to cripple some of us.

A vote for the safety net is not a vote to keep schools open but a vote to insure that the quality of education in Oregon depends on where you live.

Connie Whitlock
Sandy

Care agency also concerned

We at Mount Hood Hospice are deeply concerned about the proposed cuts in city funding for the Sandy Senior Center.

The services provided by and through the Senior Center to older residents of Sandy are vital in helping them maintain their independence. As an agency also involved in serving senior citizens in this community, Mount Hood Hospice urges the city of Sandy to continue its support of the senior center at current levels.

Judith Wesley,
executive director
Mount Hood Hospice

Double tax charge untrue

Statements have been made recently regarding alleged "double taxation" in Clackamas County involving the sheriff's levy and city police protection within the county.

As I write this, I am listening to the county and West Linn/Oregon City dispatch systems. For the second time that I know of since the recent levy failure, sheriff's personnel have been called in to assist Oregon City police with additional officers to control a situation that overtaxed the city resources.

The first time involved a barricaded gunman, and the second armed

Bobcats

