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Ski resort sale goes before county board

The Clackamas County Board of Commissioners is scheduled to decide Thursday whether to sell the Mirror Mountain ski area to American Guaranty Life Insurance Co. or at a sheriff's sale in September.

With interest and penalties, the county is owed more than \$190,000 in back taxes, said Mike Judd, chief assistant county counsel.

The ski area, located at Government Camp, was closed last winter, and the Alpine Slide has been closed this summer.

Judd said one option the board has is to sell the ski resort back to the owner of record for \$250,000.

Multorpor Ski Bowl Inc. was formerly the owner of record, but last fall a Clackamas County Circuit Court named American Guaranty Life Insurance Co. the receiver after a lawsuit was filed by American Guaranty against Multorpor for failure to repay a loan.

Judd said Kirk Hanna, of Hanna Car Wash Systems, was planning to purchase the ski resort from American Guaranty.

County commissioners will consider the ski resort sale when they meet Thursday at 10 a.m. in the hearings room of the Courthouse Annex, 906 Main Street, Oregon City. The commissioners still have the option of holding a sheriff's sale in September, with the minimum bid for the ski resort set at \$250,000.

Judd said the \$250,000 would help the county meet its expenses. In addition to the back taxes, the county has spent money on fire and liability insurance, for security and maintenance.

The county has title to the buildings and ski lifts. The Forest Service owns the land and grants the operator a permit.

If the county sells the resort at a sheriff's auction for more than \$250,000, the money raised beyond expenses would be split between taxing districts in the county, which include the county, the sheriff's office, school districts and fire districts.

The last two years the ski resort was open, it was operated under a lease agreement between Mirror Mountain and Multorpor Ski Bowl.

Council says no to zoning change

A proposed zoning change for downtown Sandy, which would have allowed some industrial uses in the commercial core, was rejected by the Sandy City Council Monday evening because of questions about how it would affect the business district.

Dale Nicholls, a former Sandy business owner who still works as a real estate salesman, helped convince the council to reject the zoning change, which enjoyed strong support when first proposed.

Nicholls told the council it would be detrimental to the downtown area to allow storage facilities or light manufacturing in the commercial core. Such uses would spoil the chances Sandy has of realizing its potential for a quality downtown, Nicholls said.

Allowing industrial uses eventually would cause the value of the property in the core area to drop to its equivalent in the industrial park, "profoundly affecting values and marketability," he said.

In earlier meetings, the council

heard testimony from supporters of the zoning change who said light manufacturing could occur downtown without disturbing existing business owners. Light manufacturing and other uses, such as research facilities, would add to the customer base downtown, the council was told.

Councilor Brad Picking said the purpose of the proposed zoning change was to give the owners of vacant buildings downtown additional options. As an example, he cited a person who wanted to operate a deli in Sandy and also manufacture food products, which the zoning change would have allowed.

"His intent was good, too," Picking said.

But overall, councilors were uncomfortable with the change and voted 5-0 against it.

"The issue is far from black and white," said Councilor Mort Spence. "Let's set it aside for now, reconsidering some of the issues brought up here."



Sandy muster team members take aim at a target.

Fellowship, fun highlight of muster

About 45 teams and 1,500 to 2,000 spectators were a part of the Sandy Volunteer Firefighters Association's Fly-in Muster, which was held at Country Squire Airpark south of Sandy this weekend.

Chuck Chaffin, president of the volunteer association, said it took all 54 members of the volunteer association to pull it off.

"Looking back, I know it was a lot of work, but everybody had a good time, so it was worth it," Chaffin said.

The volunteers knew what they were getting into when they applied to the Fireman's Muster Association of Oregon to hold one of the state's three musters. Sandy also hosted a muster in 1984.

For Steve and Donna Wilson, captains of the men's and women's teams, it was more than an opportunity to socialize with other firefighters from Oregon and Washington.

Although they claim they are not entirely serious about the muster competition, both the men and women hold state records in pumper competition.

The women set their record this

weekend. The men earned their record at an earlier competition at Woodburn. Although numerous skill competitions are held, from "bucket brigade" to "steam engine," Steve Wilson said the Sandy teams specialize in events that utilize the association's 1940 motorized pumper.

The fire truck, built by Howard Cooper Corp. of Portland in 1940, has a six-cylinder engine that puts the firefighters in Class 3, or in competition with other departments using approximately the same age and size of engine.

About 10 fire companies compete in that class, Wilson said.

He said the firefighters are especially proud of the truck since it has been repainted. It won a trophy for best restoration job recently at the Stayton muster.

The fire truck was stripped down, sanded and painted, with volunteer Steve Olson supervising the work. Pete Henninger of Brightwood did the gold leaf and striping.

Wilson said the truck looked so nice that they had hesitations about using it.

In the pumper competition, about

150 feet of hose is laid out, with one person staying at the starting line to hook the hose to the hydrant while the rest of the crew rides to the firing line in the truck. At the firing line, a nozzle is screwed into the hose. Once the water begins to flow through the system, the team must knock over a target.

The men's team can accomplish the feat in 24.53 seconds, the women in 27.75.

But Wilson played down the importance of the record, saying that records are set to be broken.

Musters have a value in that they get the families of firefighters involved in a social activity. "It brings people together for another reason besides the fire line or a first-aid call," Wilson said.

Although not all the volunteers compete on the muster team, Chaffin agrees that it is valuable for firefighters to get together in a social setting.

"It's good to talk with firefighters from Southern Oregon and Olympia, Washington. You wouldn't think there would be that much difference, but there is some," Chaffin said.

"It's good for everybody to get together, tell war stories and have a good time."

Wilson said the Country Squire Airpark is an excellent setting for a muster, and he added that Art Skipper, a Portland Fire District firefighter, allows the Sandy volunteers to use the site at no charge.

Camping facilities were set up at the airpark, and during the day five local organizations sold food and soft drinks.

The band Picture This, which features Mark and Eric Hadley of Sandy, played at a dance Saturday night.

The Sandy Fire District was formed in the 1940s. The district's first fire engine, purchased for \$3,476, is the one now being used in competitions.

Gary Connelly, fire chief, said the volunteers took pride in running a good muster. The camaraderie and teamwork involved in competing in a muster are good for the organization, he said.

And, he added, "What's a volunteer fire department without a little fun?"



Photo by Scott Newton

The ogre and the prince

Dixie Cochran, left, and Kris Herrell battle with broadswords while Alexis Wetzel watches. Cochran is the ogre king in the Sandy Youth Theater's production of "The Magic Crystal." Herrell, a prince, defends the people of the Castle of the Crystal in the play, and tries to win the affections of Wetzel.

The play combines all the elements of youth theater, from magic and comedy to major battle scenes, said director Larry Leedy. Leedy adapted the medieval tale from a Brothers Grimm story. The play will be performed Friday, Aug. 21, at 8 p.m. at the Birdcage Theater at Meinig Park.

Sign must be removed if building stays empty

The owners of the Wheatland Building in Sandy have 30 days to remove a sign or find a tenant following Monday's City Council meeting.

The City Council in July had ordered the sign to be removed but reconsidered that action Monday. The council's original decision was in response to a request by Bill and Betty Herzog, owners of T.J.'s Restaurant, 39024 Proctor Blvd., who had told the council that the sign was blocking the view of their building from the highway.

But at Monday night's council meeting, owners of the building testified that forced removal of the sign would cause an economic hardship.

The council took no action, in effect giving the managers of the Wheatland Building 30 days to sign a tenant. Thirty days is the time a business or resident is given to comp-

ly with a council action.

If a tenant is signed, the building could no longer be considered abandoned, which is the basis on which the Herzogs had asked for the sign's removal.

Ron Kawamoto, who represents Portland realtor Norris, Beggs and Simpson, told the council he has a verbal agreement with a tenant who will occupy the entire second floor of the building.

Kawamoto also had argued that the building had never been abandoned, that utilities, taxes and insurance had been paid during the three years the building has been empty. "Hardly can the building be considered abandoned," Kawamoto said.

Dolores Kelly of Condon, who represents the estate that owns the Wheatland Building, also attended the meeting.

No charges filed in shooting

Law enforcement officials still are investigating last week's fatal shooting involving a Corbett man and his son, said Bill Martin, investigator with the Clackamas County District Attorney's Office.

Martin said Monday that officials still were conducting interviews with witnesses and that no charges had been filed.

Gordon Earl Claus, 30, of 8767 S.E. Bull Run Road, was shot three times by his father with a .357-caliber pistol between 4:35 and 4:55 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 12.

Claus had been in a fight with his girlfriend, Eve M. Norton, 23, according to Deputy Russ Williams, public information officer for the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office.

Claus then apparently began fighting with his father, Earl Albert Claus Jr., 53. The shooting victim was reportedly on his way into the house wielding a 4- or 5-foot metal pipe when he was shot, Williams said.

The younger Claus was shot in the hip, groin and upper shoulder.