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THE REDMOND Spokesman

A special good morning to subscriber Darren Dutcher

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District forecasts small decline in enrollment

BY **BRYCE DOLE**
For The Spokesman

Central Oregon school districts, including Redmond, are projecting minimal changes in enrollment for the 2022-23 academic year and are building conservative budgets around the forecasts.

At least three districts are projecting slight growth in enrollment for the upcoming school year, despite enrollment

dropping in some parts of Oregon during the pandemic. In its proposed budget document for the upcoming fiscal year, the Redmond School District is forecasting its third consecutive year of declining overall enrollment, but only by a handful of students. Middle school and high school enrollment is projected to decline, but the district is projecting an increase in elementary enrollment overall.

But in Crook County Chief Financial Officer Annie Logan said her district is forecasting the second consecutive year of growth. Logan said that's no surprise.

"If you look at Prineville, we're a community that's growing," Logan said.

Last year, the district grew by roughly 5%, Logan said. This year, the district projects enrollment will increase by 2%, which is 94 students, a "slight increase" that is likely driven by population growth, Logan said. Logan is still building this year's budget proposal, she said.

The Sisters School District is also projecting "small growth" in enrollment, up from 1,100 to 1,120 students, Superintendent Curt Scholl said. Last year, the district forecast

1,140 students, but enrollment ended up lower, so "this year, we're being a bit more conservative," Scholl said.

Scholl said he anticipates the upcoming district budget to be similar to this year's due to the steady enrollment.

Holmstrom said that, already, more students are showing up to school as mask mandates have been lifted, making it unclear what the actual turnout could be next year. She said that makes a big impact on the amount of state school funds that schools get per student.

"They might all show up in September," she said, adding: "We just don't know... We could have as many as we had today, or we could have 100 more."

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A PLACE TO REST

FACILITY TO HOUSE HOMELESS YOUTH, FAMILIES IN CRISIS

BY **ZACK DEMARS** • For The Spokesman

An old house in Redmond could soon see new life sheltering youth and families in crisis.

J Bar J Youth Services on Wednesday received its first donation of seed funding to remodel one of its existing properties to be used as a host home and emergency housing for youth experiencing homelessness, a resource sorely lacking in the city.

Kindred Connections, the branch of J Bar J that focuses on supporting families in crisis, will use the property as a Redmond hub. Previously, different branches of J Bar J used the building to shelter survivors of human trafficking and youth transitioning out of shelter.

"The Kindred Connections center is going to warmly welcome youth and their families with a space," said Jana Hill, the nonprofit's agency and church liaison. "I feel the most important thing is they'll find belonging."

The building needs some work before it'll be ready for its new use. Hill said the nonprofit plans to knock out a few walls to expand a space for volunteers to meet with youth and families in crisis, and to expand the kitchen to make it suitable for family cooking classes.

Kindred Connection's main goal is to keep families together, preventing youth from running away from home and becoming homeless in the first place, according to Eva Gill, a spokesperson for the nonprofit.



Dean Guemsey/The Bulletin

Jana Hill speaks in front of the J Bar J Canal House in Redmond on Wednesday.

"It's prevention," Gill said. "A lot of times we're able to help a family prevent that child from running away."

The nonprofit does that largely by building connections with youth and families. Volunteers build relationships with youth, and staff mediates disputes between family members that might be driving youth to leave the home, and, for some families, the lessons learned can encourage them to rebuild the relationships in their own families.

Once renovated, the nonprofit's building — right across the street from the Homestead Park Bike Pump Track, which Hill hopes will help attract families who might be using the park — will serve as a place for initiating those connections.

Volunteers and staff will meet with families for mediation and to help navigate services, and the facility will be open after school hours to offer youth a safe place to be outside the home. Hill said volunteers will also schedule programs to teach life skills, like cooking classes and resume creation workshops.

"The hope is that volunteers will create programs and events that kids can be a part of," Hill said. "We'll utilize all the experience the volunteers have to teach kids and build belonging."

The facility will also house two emergency, temporary shelter beds for youth experiencing homelessness and awaiting placement in a host home or at The LOFT, J Bar J's Bend youth shelter. Redmond currently lacks a permanent youth



Dean Guemsey/The Bulletin

The living room of the J Bar J Canal House in Redmond.

shelter of its own.

All told, the nonprofit expects the renovations to cost just over \$130,000, with Wednesday's \$25,000 donation from Subaru of Bend laying the groundwork for future fundraising and grant-seeking efforts. Hill hopes renovations will be completed and the facility opened this fall.

The Kindred Connections building is just part of J Bar J's expansion of family services into Redmond. The nonprofit received funding earlier this year to open a "basic center" in the city to provide family mediation and homelessness prevention services.

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"The Kindred Connections center is going to warmly welcome youth and their families with a space. I feel the most important thing is they'll find belonging."

— Jana Hill, the nonprofit's agency and church liaison

Spokesman Calendar

Events in and around Redmond

The Redmond Spokesman welcomes event information for its community calendar. Submissions are limited to nonprofit, free and live entertainment events. Deadline is 5 p.m. Thursday for the following Wednesday's paper. Items are published on a space-available basis and may be edited. Contact us at news@redmondspokesman.com or fax 541-548-3203.

Tuesday 4/12

Writers Writing — Quiet Writing Time: Enjoy the focus of a quiet space with the benefit of others' company; 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; free; Redmond Public Library, 827 SW Deschutes Ave., Redmond; deschuteslibrary.org or 541-312-1050.

City Council Meeting: A regular meeting will be held; 6-8 p.m.; free; Redmond City Hall Council Chambers, 411 SW Ninth St., Redmond; redmondoregon.gov or 541-923-7710.

Trivia Tuesday: Go with a team or team up there to play genuine UKB Trivia live and possibly win gift certificates; 6:30-8:30 p.m.; free; Initiative Brewing, 424 NW Fifth St., Redmond; facebook.com/InitiativeBrew or 541-527-4380.

Thursday 4/14

Aaron Rhen — Range Music Series: The local American roots musician will perform; 5:30-8:30 p.m.; free; Brasada Ranch, 16986 SW Brasada Ranch Road, Powell Butte; brasada.com or 855-318-4960.

Bow Wow Bingo: Join for BowWow Bingo every Thursday evening benefiting BrightSide Animal Center; 6:30-8 p.m.; \$1 each card for first two games, \$2 each for second two games; Cascade Lakes at Seventh St., 855 SW Seventh St., Redmond; facebook.com/CascadeLakesBrewingCo or 541-388-4998.

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The Spokesman uses recycled newsprint

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