

Sports & Recreation



Submitted photo

The Redmond SunWest Builders baseball team won the Single-A American Legion state championship in Aurora on Sunday.

American Legion squad wins state tournament

BY BRIAN RATHBONE
CO Media Group

A trip to the state tournament was supposed to be the high point of the summer for the Redmond SunWest Builders American Legion baseball team.

But it proved to be much more than that after the squad won four of five games to capture the Single-A American Legion state championship at North Marion High School in Aurora this past weekend.

“State was just icing on the cake,” said Redmond coach Marc Horner. “We went in playing well and the kids had some great chemistry. All of them had a pretty big role.”

The team of players 19 and younger from Redmond beat Ole Athletics of Eugene 14-4 in the championship game on Sunday to advance to the Northwest Class A Regional Tournament in Vernal, Utah, starting Aug. 5.

It was the second time during the tournament that Redmond beat Ole Athletics by 10 runs. Redmond also accrued wins over teams from Roseburg and North Marion, with its one loss coming against the Columbia Gorge Hustlers of The Dalles after already securing a spot in the title game.

During the five games, Redmond scored 47 total runs. Not all of them were needed, because the pitching staff allowed just 13

runs — no more than four in a single game — during the tournament.

“We scored more runs than we have scored all year,” Horner said. “I think up and down the lineup we hit the ball really well. It was a lot of fun.”

Of the 16 players on SunWest, 12 of them played for Redmond High School this past spring.

“In my 25 years of coaching, this is one of the most mature teams I’ve been a part of,” said Horner, who previously coached at Redmond High for 12 years.

Now Redmond will test itself against the best teams from Alaska, Montana, Wyoming and Utah in an eight-team double-elimination tournament in Utah.

A team from Oregon has won the title eight times since 1986, with the most recent coming in 2013 (Central Point Comets).

But according to Horner, the Northwest Class A Regional, while on a bigger stage and against the region’s top competition, might not be as intense as the state tournament, mainly because the team has now reached the pinnacle of the American Legion season.

“It is not as nerve-wracking,” he said, “because it is our last tournament.”

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Oasis

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It takes a village

The location of the site, a sticky issue that has slowed starting on the project, is also getting closer to a final spot. Current plans call for the shelter to be just north of the Redmond Airport on the north side of U.S. Highway 126. The area is part of a 10-acre plot that Deschutes County designated for addressing homelessness.

The village, however, only needs two acres for its plan to include a garden area, dog run, long-term parking/storage for RVs and 20 housing units to be built in conjunction with Hayden Homes, Heart of Oregon Corps and Redmond High School construction technology classes.

HOC is set to build 15 units while one or two units will be built per semester by Redmond High School Construction Technology classes for a total of three to six units.

“It’s a twofer for the community: support Oasis Village and offer our youth an opportunity to learn marketable construction skills,” said Bohac in a recent press release. “Partnerships like this and community support are key to addressing homelessness in our community.”

“We’re really proud to be working with the youth in our community,” Cook said. “We’re hoping this isn’t a one-and-done project [with Redmond High School].”

The units themselves, which are set to be 90-120 square feet “tiny bedrooms,” are modest, but have enough space for a bed, desk and closet fit to house 1-2 adults per unit. And, because they are not permanent structures, Oasis Village has some flexibility in the layout of units and can organize them and move them as needed.

The village will accept residents for six months to two years, as long as they show progress on an individual work plan toward stable housing. Pets will be allowed, but drugs and alcohol will not.

The current plan is to build 20 units before taking a pause to consult with the county “to make

sure everybody is happy with where we are in the process and any midcourse corrections we need to make before increasing ultimately to 30-40 units,” Cook said.

The village will act as the third transitional shelter in Redmond, after Bethlehem Inn and Shepherd’s House, which is slated to open in 2022. But Oasis Village may be easier to access. Bethlehem Inn has a higher barrier to entry while Shepherd’s House is mostly faith-based. Oasis Village, meanwhile, will act as a low-barrier, village-style shelter for those who may not fit the criteria for the other options.

The Oasis board is conducting monthly discussions with other groups building shelter villages in Central Oregon. Because of their timeline, they have the advantage of being able to learn from others’ mistakes, Cook said.

“We’re all working together to make these developments happen,” he said.

Missing pieces

Despite all these efforts, however, there are still some missing pieces to the overall response to homelessness in Redmond. Oasis Village, Shepherd’s House and Bethlehem Inn all act as transitional housing, but there is still a lack of temporary supportive housing and permanent supportive housing.

Because of this, people may have a place to stay for a limited period of time, but quickly find themselves back on the street. The average stay at Bethlehem Inn is about 30 days, according to Tara Feurtado, program director at the shelter.

Long-term supportive housing, along with affordable housing, is still missing — which can be needed as people claw their way out of poverty and homelessness.

The efforts by Bethlehem Inn, Shepherd’s House and Oasis Village, however, are still integral to the overall success of Central Oregon’s response to homelessness.

“We need all of these pathways for people out of homelessness and we need them as fast as we can get them,” said Phil Chang, Deschutes County Commissioner.

In Redmond alone, the board

of Oasis Village estimate around 200 individuals struggling with homelessness based on point in time counts and numbers from the winter shelter, which are undercounts of the whole population, Cook said.

Looking ahead

There are still hurdles for Oasis Village to vault over — some related to the rising cost of construction materials, others to bureaucratic red tape. But, much of it is related to the location of the site.

The units will need access to utilities such as water, sewer and power, which will be difficult to connect with the utility lines running south of U.S. Highway 126 and with the hard rock underneath the site.

“We’re trying to be cost-effective,” said Hayes McCoy, the civil engineer for Oasis Village.

Additionally, the location needs to be within walking distance of businesses and services. This may get easier, however, as conversations to expand 17th Street continue. Currently, the only way to enter the village would be from the highway, which is not convenient for walking and biking. With 17th Street going past, or through the village, access would be much better, McCoy said.

Once it connects, “all the sudden it’ll just be magical,” said County Commissioner Tony DeBone. “A lot better access to that property.”

Getting involved

For those interested in Oasis Village, attendees at the Deschutes County Fair will be able to see for themselves a recently constructed unit sponsored by Redmond Rotary to help kick off their fundraising campaign.

“We’re going to be encouraging the community to get involved,” Cook said. “Sponsor these units and really be a part of Oasis Village and for Oasis Village to be a part of our community. When I first saw these interior units, I was almost in tears because it is far beyond what I envisioned possible in that space and we’re just really looking forward to be able to bring this to Redmond!”

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