

# ORCHARD, continued from Page A1

“Mechanical means would entail mowing, trimming, leveling, etc. with tractors and implements. This would create dust, and noise, but there is no chemicals involved,” he wrote.

Schurter wrote that Round-Up would be used “very sparingly” and signs would be posted near the Big Toy (located within the orchard and the reason for the pesticide concern), the KRP entrance and other places as needed.

“Work on the trees and grounds would be attempted when a limited amount of visitors were at the park and curtailed when special events are going on,” he wrote.

As have others, Schurter noted the poor health of the trees. City officials and others have estimated blight means the trees will only last a few more years before having to be cut down.

“Because of the poor health of the trees, Schurter Enterprises LLC will not be liable for the death of the trees,” Schurter wrote. “The non-use of chemicals will speed up the death of the trees, but it is hard to say

exactly how long they will last. Hazelnut trees of that variety and age suffer from Eastern Filbert Blight, and spraying and pruning is the only effective way to combat it. Pruning will hold it at bay, but they will eventually succumb.”

In the past, Weathers was paying the city \$9,000 a year in rent and keeping all proceeds. Schurter’s proposal calls for 15 percent of net profits from the farming of the hazelnuts to be given to the city as rent.

City Attorney Shannon Johnson emphasized during Monday’s meeting Schurter’s proposal was not solicited.

“Staff is concerned no one is maintaining the trees,” Johnson said. “It can be a big expense to keep the weeds down and snagged trees. Council would have to act tonight to get maintenance done and crops for this season.”

Figuring out what to do with the trees has been a question brought up recently, including at last month’s Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting (see related story, page A9).

While there is the potential financial windfall for all involved, mayor Cathy Clark noted after Monday’s meeting that’s not the main benefit.

“It appears this is a chance to be responsible for a city asset,” Clark said, noting a desire to have Schurter – and any future farmer – take down dead trees during the lease. “This is more sustainable without having to do the spraying.”

Clark and Lawyer both expressed surprise at someone stepping forward to resume hazelnut farming.

“It did seem like it was done,” Clark said.

Lawyer said the international demand for hazelnuts makes the orchard attractive.

“That’s more of a factor for the farmer,” Lawyer said. “If the price (of the crop) was on the way down, I’m not sure he’d be talking to us.”

Clark feels all will benefit.

“It’s a win-win for everyone,” the mayor said. “It helps us care for our resources. He believes he can do this in a sustainable way without spraying the orchard.”

Schurter told the *Keizertimes* on Tuesday he doesn’t know how much longer the trees will survive.

“The idea is to farm it not using pesticides,” he said. “I’m not saying they are bad, but this is a way to alleviate the concern. As far as the trees, this will affect them in a bad way. They

will end up dying a lot quicker than if we could control the blight. It’s something you have to work around.

“They’re already dying,” Schurter added. “They will continue to die. I expect them to die at a quicker rate than if we could spray. At orchards with newer trees, you don’t have to spray those. But with an old variety like that, they are going to die eventually. I can understand the concerns people have.”

Schurter, who noted the harvesting would be done in the fall – his proposal calls for the contract to run through Nov. 30 – learned about the issue by reading the story in this paper about Weathers getting out of his contract.

“I thought it would be a shame that the crop would fall and rot on the ground,” he said. “I figured it’s not a bad idea to at least harvest it and farm it. Even if (the trees) are going to die, at least you can get something out of it. The city benefits with a percentage of the sales and, even more, it will look good. The orchards will be mowed and dead trees will be cut out.”

No timeline was given for when a contract would be signed.

## Wine tasting at KHC Aug. 13

The Keizer Heritage Center will hold a public wine tasting on Thursday, Aug. 13, as part of its on-going Heritage Thursday series of events.

Wines from local wineries will be available for tasting; there will be light appetizers to taste with the wines.

The Keizer Art Association

will be stage artist demonstrations during the event.

Live music will be provided.

The cost is \$5 per glass, \$2 for refills. The fee includes a free glass.

For information contact the Keizer Heritage Center at 503-393-9660.

## Spirit of ‘45 concert Sunday

Oregon Spirit of ‘45, a group that honors the men and women of the World War II generation, is hosting Oregon’s 234th Army Band for a concert at Salem’s Historic Elsinore Theatre Sunday, Aug. 9.

The concert begins at 3 p.m. Admission is free. Tickets are available at the Elsinore box office 170 High Street S.E.

## Artists: get your work on the Keizer holiday card

A call has been made to area artists to enter submissions for the 2015 City of Keizer holiday greeting card.

The Keizer Public Arts Commission, which works to bring art into the community, invites residents of all ages to submit art work that expresses the holiday season in Keizer. The deadline is Friday,

Sept. 18. All submitted entries become the property of the city.

The artist of the selected artwork will receive a \$100 gift card to Michael’s Art and Crafts.

Contest rules and an application can be downloaded at keizer.org; they are also available at city hall.

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Strout says she plans on achieving her revenue goals by working at the high standard she sets for herself.

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