

Jewell accepts grant to open health center

Concerns about efficacy, costs were raised

By **BRENNA VISSER**
The Daily Astorian



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian
The Jewell School District will get a health center.

JEWELL — In a split vote, the Jewell School Board on Monday night accepted a grant to start a school-based health center.

The annual \$60,000 grant will help establish an in-house health center that could provide primary care services such as general exams, sick visits, treatment of minor injuries, vaccinations and more for staff and students.

The health center could issue prescriptions, but the school board declined to consider alcohol and drug counseling, mental health and reproductive health services.

A steering committee will design what services the health center will offer, as well as possible locations.

Clatsop County will staff it with a physician's assistant, which could save the school district \$10,000 by eliminating the need for a school nurse.

"Even if it's just open two days a week, it'd be a very busy place and meet a lot of needs," Jewell Principal Terrence Smyth said.

Michael McNickle, the county's public health director, initially reached out to Jewell's administration this summer after learning there were more grants available for medically underserved communities.

But the proposal has been met with continuous criticism from some school board members, who had concerns about safety after hearing the clinic would be open to the public. McNickle reaffirmed to school board members that they can control what services

the clinic offers, how often it operates and who can visit.

The school board voted 3-2 to accept the grant.

School board member Brian Meier, who voted against the grant, raised questions about how many families would be interested in using the program. He also said he felt more research should be done about the feasibility and costs before committing to a grant. McNickle estimated running the clinic would cost about \$400 a week if it were open one day, which may or may not be covered by the grant, depending on how the school board and steering committee decided to allocate the money.

"It's not free," Meier said. School board member Michael Stahly also voted against the grant, arguing the board only got "one side of the story" from McNickle and wanted to hear from school districts like Astoria, which decided to decline the offer.

McNickle explained the Astoria School Board voted in 2013 not to partner with Coastal Family Health Center on a school-based health center over reproductive health services and parent permis-

sion, but Stahly remained skeptical.

"I just don't know if there wasn't more to it," Stahly said.

School board chairman Bryan Swearingen and board members Ginger Kaczinski and Michael Wammack voted in favor of the health center, seeing it as a way encourage more preventative care to reduce absences, as well as bridge critical medical services to families who would otherwise have to travel to Seaside or Astoria.

"We cannot deny the kids the simplest things like medical attention. We don't do that with food. We don't turn them away because they can't afford lunch; we find grants to feed them," Kaczinski said. "Our kids are so rural they don't have the same opportunities as kids in town ... Maybe it helps out a few parents who struggle, who can't afford to take off work to take their kids to the doctor."

McNickle expects a soft opening for the clinic in May or June.

"If it doesn't work then we don't have to continue it," Swearingen said. "But I think we owe it to the students to try."

Inslee calls coal export idea a 'harebrained' plan

Wyden also speaks out

Associated Press

Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee says the Trump administration's idea to use military bases or other federal properties to export fossil fuels to Asia would undermine national security and state rights.

Inslee, a Democrat, called the idea a "harebrained proposal" in a statement.

The potential use of naval or other federal properties as transshipment points was described to The Associated Press by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and two Republican lawmakers.

West Coast officials have rejected private-sector efforts to build new coal ports to ship the fuel to Asia.

Inslee says President Donald Trump should consider the national security threats of climate change.

Oregon U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden said the Trump administration is "trampling" on the rights of West Coast communities.

Wyden, a Democrat, said in statement that the federal government should invest in renewable fuels and not try to prop up dirty energy sources such as coal.

"The U.S. should be doing more to invest in clean energy, not threatening the health and safety

of Oregonians by propping up dirty energy investors. Zinke's approach shows a complete disregard for science and the voices of local communities," the senator said.

The Trump administration's proposal would advance the administration's agenda of establishing American energy dominance on the world stage.

Zinke says it's a matter of national security to ensure U.S. allies in the Pacific Rim have access to affordable fuels.

National security also has been cited by the administration as justification for keeping domestic coal-burning power plants on line to prevent disruptions of electricity supplies.

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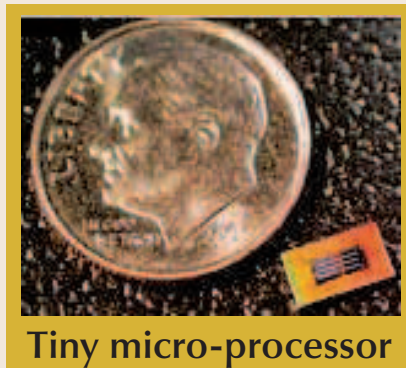
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