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Walmart heads back to LUBA

Retailer files notice of intent to appeal with state agency over store expansion

By BEN MITCHELL
News staff writer

Just over a month after it was made, a decision rendered by the Hood River City Council on whether Walmart should be allowed to expand its Hood River store has been appealed at the state level.

On Friday, Greg Hathaway, attorney for Walmart Stores, Inc., filed with the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) a notice of intent to appeal the city's decision made early last month to deny Walmart the ability to add a 30,000-square-foot ex-

pansion to its current 72,000-square-foot store on Wasco Avenue.

The filing marks the third time in as many years the issue has been sent to LUBA. In February 2012, an ad hoc citizens group, Hood River Citizens for a Local Economy, appealed the council's original decision in December 2011 to approve the expansion. LUBA subsequently remanded the decision to the council on the basis of procedural errors that the board said were made.

In December 2012, the council reversed its stance

and ruled that Walmart's vested right to expand the store had expired and thus denied the expansion. Walmart then appealed the new decision to LUBA, which in turn remanded the decision again to the city, ruling that councilors had made additional procedural errors when they considered Walmart's application. In December 2014, a public hearing was held to address the most recent remand and councilors voted once again to deny the expansion.

The notice of intent to appeal is the first step in the

LUBA appeal process and does not include any information as to why Walmart is appealing the council's decision. Hathaway was contacted with a request to explain the decision for the appeal but did not respond as of press time. Records show it cost Walmart \$400 to file the notice of intent to appeal.

The last time Walmart appealed the decision, the retailer challenged the process by which Councilor Kate McBride had been allowed to participate in the Dec. 2012

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Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

DUCK-DECKED

The Oregon Ducks lost the National Championship game Monday, but there was no lack of fans donned in green-and-gold at viewing locations around downtown. Sue Dominguez of Hood River rocks the UO colors as she watches with her family at Pietro's Pizza. For a gallery of photos on the disappointing, but festive, season finale game, see page A10.



Photo by Adam Lapiere

MEANINGFUL MOMENT

Hood River Valley High School teacher and head wrestling coach Trent Kroll exchanges a handshake and a bow with Yoichi Okada, head coach of Japan's U18 national wrestling team Monday afternoon at HRVHS. A group of 16 visiting Japanese wrestlers were in Hood River as part of a cultural exchange trip that brought them to Montana, Washington and Oregon, where they toured the area, stayed with host families and participated in friendly wrestling matches like the one HRVHS hosted Monday. In front of a packed audience, members of the Eagles' wrestling team (and two from The Dalles) did their best against their Japanese counterparts. As anticipated, all 12 matches were won by the visiting national team wrestlers.

Walden holds Town Hall meeting Saturday

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) holds his first town hall meetings in 2015 beginning on Saturday, with events scheduled in seven counties: Hood River, Wasco, Umatilla, Wallowa, Union, Baker, and Malheur.

The Hood River and Wasco County meetings will be Saturday, 8 to 9 a.m. at Hood River Valley Adult Center, 2010 Sterling Drive, and 10:30 to 11 at Fort Dalles Readiness Center, 402 East Scenic Drive, The Dalles.

"These town hall meetings are another way I keep in close touch with the concerns of Oregonians, along with regular telephone town halls, via Facebook, Twitter,

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Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea
GREG WALDEN gestures during his previous town hall, in November 2014.

HRCESO named SAR program of the year

OSSA also honors Sgt. Casteneda, Dep. Harvey, with Lifesaving Awards

Hood River County Sheriff's Office received individual as well as collective honors from the Oregon State Sheriff's Association.

OSSA held its annual banquet in Bend last month and gave out awards that are competitive and open for statewide nomination.

The Hood River County Sheriff's Office was recognized by the OSSA Search

and Rescue Advisory Council as the Search and Rescue Program of the year, and two of its members received Lifesaving awards for a May 2014 river rescue.

Great community partnerships and volunteer programs like the Hood River Crag Rats, have been the key to success and are absolutely critical to fulfill the volume of missions performed by Hood River County, according to Hood River County Sheriff Matt English.

Hood River County's Search and Rescue needs have grown exponentially in recent years and show no signs of decreasing. In recent years, there has been a

significant uptick in trail rescue needs within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. In 2013, the Sheriff's Office fielded 93 search and rescue calls for service. In 2014, that number exceeded 100. Counties with similar search and rescue volumes often have four or five times the staffing that Hood River County has.

"I'm extremely proud of our organization and the work that our personnel performs every day. Although our staff doesn't seek or expect recognition, it's very nice to be acknowledged and all of the accolades are truly well deserved," English said. Sgt. Ricardo Castaneda

and Deputy John Harvey were honored with Lifesaving awards for their actions on May 16, 2014 when they saved the life of a kiteboarder on the Columbia River. The kiteboarder had become entangled in a navigational buoy and was being pulled under water.

Harvey and Castaneda were able to reach the kiteboarder in the Sheriff's Office boat, cut her free from her kite lines and bring her on board safely. Following the rescue, the kiteboarder made statements that she was at the point of giving up and would not have survived if Castaneda and Harvey hadn't rescued her.



Photo by Richard Hallman

HOOD RIVER County Search and Rescue efforts bring together paid deputies and community volunteers, and are enhanced by specialized equipment for all seasons, including this sno-cat.

LOOK INSIDE

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Red Cross Bloodmobile visits Jan. 28

The next American Red Cross bloodmobile visit to Hood River will be Jan 28, 12:30 to 6 p.m., at Oregon National Guard Armory, 12th and Belmont streets.

January is a challenging time for blood donations. Inclement weather can result in blood drive cancellations, and cold and flu season may cause some donors to be unable to make or keep blood donation appointments, according to Red Cross spokesman Jared Schultzman.

To learn more, or to schedule a donation, download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to make an appointment or for more information.

Three To Go

Hood River Chamber sets two dates

Hood River Chamber of Commerce hosts the monthly Coffee Clatter, Friday from 8 to 9 a.m. at the Chamber offices, on Marina Way, next to exit 64.

This is a networking opportunity that is open to the public. Coffee and refreshments will be served, and businesses and organizations can take turns making announcements or giving updates.

Meanwhile, the Chamber has announced the annual installation and awards dinner for Jan. 23 at Columbia Gorge Hotel. This year's theme is Prom Night.

For details, go to hoodriver.org

WS Library hosts Scrabble Tournament

White Salmon Valley Community Library hosts a Scrabble Tournament Saturday from 2 to 4:30 p.m. at the library, 77 N.E. Wauna Ave. All ages are invited to this "fun and lightly competitive" event.

Cost is a \$5 suggested donation per player; registration is recommended by calling the library at 1-509-493-1132. Teams of two will compete; single players can be paired up. Prizes will be awarded and refreshments provided.

Proceeds support teen summer reading programs.

