

Sen. Hansell's alternative to annexation gets House hearing

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Sen. Bill Hansell's proposal to get Milton-Freewater off the hook from a forced annexation has its first public hearing in the House next week.

Milton-Freewater faces spending millions if Senate Bill 121 does not pass. Under existing state law, the small city would have to provide sewer and water to Locust Mobile Village, located about one mile northeast from the city's growth boundary, because eleven residents filed a petition for annexation due to contaminated wells. The law does not allow for other means of providing clean water.

Hansell said he is pushing SB 121 to change that.

The bill would allow for alternatives to annexation, he said, such as individual sanitation and water purification systems or the formation of local water districts. And his bill allows for the consideration of cost effectiveness.

"That's huge. But at this time that is not required to be considered," Hansell said. "We have to look at what is most cost effective to alleviate the problems."

Milton-Freewater could spend as much as \$12 million to annex the area, he said, when there are more affordable ways to solve the problem.

SB 121 also would let petitioners later remove their names if they change their minds. Hansell said some of the Milton-Freewater petitioners did not know they could trigger an expensive public works project.

"They thought one thing when they signed it," he said, "and their signatures created something else."

Under SB 121, a petition would screech to a halt if 40 percent of signers decided to remove their names.

And while SB 121 allows alternatives to annexation, it does not specify those.

Janet Propeck and her husband, Randy Propeck, own and operate Car Shoppe Pro, 1598 N. Columbia St., right across from the trailer park. She said they and other property owners would have to shell out "thousands and thousands of dollars" for the annexation, and it is not worth that.

"Bottom line is: we don't want that," she said.

Hansell called SB 121 a middle of the road approach that gives local governments the ability to find ways to solve public health needs. And the bill has an emergency clause because of the immediacy of Milton-Freewater's situation.

The Senate on April 15 passed Hansell's bill 30-0. Now it is in the House Committee on Health Care, which will hold a public hearing on the bill Wednesday.

BRIEFLY

Children injured in 3-vehicle crash

KENNEWICK — Two Hermiston children were injured near Kennewick in a three-vehicle crash. Washington State Patrol reported the driver of their car was not injured, but she did get a ticket.

Jessica R. Estes, 28, of Hermiston, was westbound on Interstate 182 in a 1999 Lincoln Navigator with a 7-year-old boy and 5-year-old girl. The sports utility vehicle around 5:45 p.m. was about 12 miles south of Kennewick when it crashed into a 2005 Subaru Legacy and then struck a 2001 Kenworth semitrailer, according to Washington State Patrol. Only the children were injured, and emergency services took them to a Kennewick hospital.

Washington State Patrol did not provide their names, extent of injuries or medical conditions.

The state patrol reported Estes received a citation for negligent driving.

Merkley to hold town halls

HERMISTON — U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, will hold town halls in Umatilla and Morrow counties on Saturday, May 16.

The day will begin at 10 a.m. at Irrigon-Junior Senior High School, 315 W. Wyoming St., before shifting to Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St., at 12:30 p.m. Merkley will answer questions and provide an update on legislation in Congress.

Since joining the Senate in 2009, Merkley has held a town hall meeting in each of Oregon's 36 counties every year.

"There are huge issues facing Oregonians and the best way for me to effectively advocate for Oregon's families and businesses is by getting out on the road," Merkley said in a statement. "I invite all residents of Morrow and Umatilla counties to come discuss what we need to do to strengthen our state and nation."

Both meetings are open to the public.

Arlington rodeo kicks off 68th year

ARLINGTON — The Arlington Jackpot Rodeo kicks off this weekend in Arlington.

In its 68th year, the event starts Saturday with a parade at 10 a.m. in downtown Arlington. The queen's luncheon follows at the United Methodist Church, 150 Hemlock St. Rodeo action begins Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m. Also, a cowboy breakfast will be served Sunday from 7-10 a.m. at the Masonic Hall, 50 Shane Drive.

Arena action features traditional rodeo events. Specialty events include mutton bustin', junior and pee wee barrel racing, steer riding and a calf scramble. The Kevin Johnson Memorial buckle will be awarded to the all-around cowboy or cowgirl. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children 12 and under. The cook shack will serve food both days.

Reigning as the Arlington Saddle Club queen is Callista Howell, 18, of Mosier. The daughter of Gaylene Howell, she is home-schooled and plans to attend Columbia Gorge Community College to pursue a career as a veterinary technician.

For more information, call 541-980-1593 or 541-980-7108.

STANFIELD

Local couple gives \$20,000 to senior center

By SEAN HART
EO Media Group

Lorraine Newman was expecting a donation to the Stanfield Senior Center last week, but the amount received was far more than she imagined.

Laura and Milton Casper of Hermiston showed up to the center's noon lunch with a \$20,000 donation from their charitable trust. Newman said it was an overwhelming gesture.

"It was staggering and awesome," said Newman, the senior center board president. "It will just be so useful. It was just a generous donation that we certainly weren't expecting. We'll definitely put it to good use."

Milton Casper, who built Sage Manor Apartments, said Stanfield residents were "awfully nice people" and he was pleased to give back.



Photo by Sean Hart for the EO Media Group
Laura and Milton Casper of Hermiston, both 84, donated \$20,000 to the Stanfield Senior Center from their charitable trust Wednesday.

"We're getting at the age where we're trying to give back to the communities," he said. "Eventually, we'll work northward, because (Hermiston) is our hometown."

Newman said the board will have to determine how the funds will be spent, but a

kitchen remodeling project is a possibility.

Milton returned to Hermiston from service in the Korean War in 1951 and married Laura, a childhood friend.

After working stints at the Army depot, Pennsylvania,

Alabama, Colorado and Korea, he told the Army in 1964 he was tired of moving around.

"That's when I put my foot down and said, 'No, I'm not going to go anymore,' and we came back to Hermiston and started building," he said. "We started building homes. Then we stopped homes and built Highland Manor Apartments — then Sage Manor, then Butte Manor, Lakeview Manor, Riverview Manor in Umatilla."

Casper said the couple plans to make donations in other communities in the future as they are able, and they are happy to give back.

"It makes us sleep pretty good," he said. "We worked pretty hard for those 14 years when we were building. If you're ever wondering what it's like to work for 28 hours a day or nine days a week, ask me."

Cinco de Mayo promise food, fun and more

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

Area Cinco de Mayo festivities feature food, music, dancing and fun.

Sometimes erroneously said to be Mexico's independence day, the date actually marks Mexico's 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla. In the United States, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a celebration of Mexican culture and heritage.

Hermiston, Milton-Freewater and Boardman feature activities in celebration of Cinco de Mayo this weekend.

HERMISTON

A carnival kicks things off for the Cinco de Mayo weekend in Hermiston.

It will be set up Friday through Sunday in the parking lot behind The Pheasant Cafe, 149 E. Main St.

The main celebration begins Sunday with a parade at 11:30 a.m. beginning at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. The parade includes the royal court for the Cinco de Mayo event, as well as dancing horses and other groups and individuals from the community. Also, the dancing horses will be on hand afterwards for people to enjoy.

Following the parade, activities will take place along Northwest Second Street between East Main Street and Gladys Avenue. Live entertainment includes Los Broncos Del Norte, Banda Arkangel-15 and Grupo Forastero. Virginia Rome said music and entertainment will rotate hourly on the Main Stage. In addition, vendors will offer everything from traditional Mexican fare to Polynesian food. A beer garden opens at 2 p.m. The activities



EO file photo
Juan Antonio Martinez of the Hood River mariachi band Los Temerosos plays on bended knee while serenading the crowd during a past Cinco de Mayo celebration in Hermiston. This year's event is Sunday in downtown Hermiston.

continue until 9 p.m.

For more information, call Rome at 541-720-6895 or Eddie de la Cruz at 541-701-4696.

MILTON-FREEWATER

The Cinco de Mayo event kicks off with a coronation dance Friday from 7-11:30 p.m. at Bethel Baptist Church, 209 S.W. First Ave. The cost is \$15 for adults or \$120 for students with identification.

The event includes a pair of live bands, La Luz de Michuacan and Sonido Show Guatrero. In addition, authentic food will be available for purchase.

Saturday's activities include a parade at 10 a.m., which begins at Freewater Park. The festival activities begin at noon with live entertainment, a soccer tournament (Shockman Field), salsa and guacamole competitions, raffles, contest winners, kids activities, a petting zoo and giveaways.

For more information, contact Kelly Smith at 509-540-5350 or dksmith2000@hotmail.com or the Milton-Freewater Downtown Alliance Office at 541-969-4485.

BOARDMAN

Food and fun is planned Saturday from 4-10 p.m. at Boardman Marina Park.

The activities include games for children, traditional music and street dancing and a beer garden. Those attending are asked to

make a monetary donation to help fund the event, as well as the Cinco de Mayo Scholarship Program, which helps local high school students in furthering their education.

For more information or to make a donation, contact Kathy Goad at 541-720-7189 or send checks to Cinco de Mayo Committee, P.O. Box 1431, Boardman, OR 97818.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

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