

Damage lingers after storm abates

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Damage from Tuesday's storm is keeping some businesses hopping as they try to keep up with the aftermath of the wild weather.

"So far today our company has looked at seven houses with roof damage," said Erica Tejada of Daniel Tejada Siding and Roofing on Thursday afternoon. "Some were pretty bad and others just had a few shingles fallen off."

The damaged roofs were the product of a storm that swept the Pacific Northwest Tuesday, killing four people and knocking out electricity for more than 1 million homes and businesses. In Umatilla County the wind was gusting at 65 miles per hour, which was more than enough to uproot trees and pull shingles off roofs.

Tejada said the roofing business has been getting "a lot of calls" to repair damage caused by the storm. For people whose roofs were damaged, she said it is important to get it fixed right away before water seeps in and causes more damage.

"If it's just a little damage we can fix it that same day," she said.

The problem is not everyone's insurance will allow them to get started on the damage right away. Claudia Dent has a hole in the roof of her Irrigon home but was told by her insurance company that their claim adjuster had a backlog of calls due to the storm and couldn't get to her house until Monday.

"To have a home that's only nine years old and to have water leaking in is frustrating," she said.

Dent said she had just had a nice siding roof installed over her deck when Tuesday's wind ripped the deck roof clean off the house, rolled it over her roof and blew it across the street, where it smashed into her neighbor's fence and "broke into a million pieces."

"My neighbors were home eating lunch and they thought an airplane had crashed. It was that loud," she said.

She didn't realize until Thursday, when she woke up to a puddle of water in the master bedroom, that the debris had ripped a hole in the



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Strong winds caused damage around Hermiston on Tuesday, including this roof on a home on SW 12th Street.



Photo contributed by Dennis Hulen

A 35-foot Douglas Fir at Dennis Hulen's house was uprooted by Tuesday's storm.

top of her roof. Fortunately one of her neighbors climbed up and located the hole for her and another one came by later with a tarp and some bricks to cover the hole.

Several phone calls to her insurance company later, however, and she's frustrated that she has to wait until next week to call a contractor after she knows what will be covered.

"They already told me that they wouldn't fix my neighbor's fence because it was an act of nature," she said.

Dennis Hulen of Hermiston is also waiting on a claim adjuster before he takes care of the missing shingles, broken deck and fallen tree that resulted from Tuesday's storm. He said his insurance company was good about getting a file opened right

away but he was told that it would be Friday or Monday before they got someone out to inspect the damage.

He said he was grateful the damage wasn't worse, however, since his 35-foot Douglas fir missed the house when it fell over Tuesday night.

"I'm not planting one of those near my house again," he said.

Hulen said he plans to have Travis Badoux of Badoux Mill and Kiln come take the tree away.

Badoux said after the storm he put a notice on Facebook saying he would be happy to take any fallen trees for the rustic furniture he builds. As of Thursday he had cut up and hauled away four trees and had 11 more people on a waiting list. He said the majority of the trees were pine.

"All of the tree will get used," he said. "Nothing will get burned."

The storm damage wasn't limited to homes, either. City of Hermiston employees have been working to cut up and haul away a tree in Victory Square Park that was uprooted in the storm.

"It was a pretty mature pine tree, and it's a shame to lose it," Parks and Recreation director Larry Fetter said.

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PILOT ROCK

City council rectifies illegal secret ballot vote

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pilot Rock City Council violated Oregon's public meeting laws Tuesday when it used a secret ballot to elect a new member to the council. City recorder Teri Porter worked Thursday to rectify the mistake.

The council voted 3-2 in favor of having Terry Womack, a discredited chiropractor, serve out the rest of the term Kacie Moss vacated when she recently resigned from the council (the *East Oregonian* in a Wednesday story incorrectly reported the vote was 5-0). Jackie Carey, community activist and former city recorder, was the other candidate seeking the seat.

The *EO* asked Pilot Rock city staff Thursday morning about the legality of the vote, and Mayor Virginia Carnes

said she realized sometime after the meeting the secret ballot was not in line with Oregon's public meetings law.

Governing bodies in Oregon must take votes in public, according to the state's 2014 Attorney General's Public Records and Meetings Manual, and the manual uses italics to leave no doubt about the use of secret ballots:

"Written ballots are not prohibited, but each ballot must identify the member voting and the vote must be announced. *Secret ballots are prohibited.*"

Porter asked each councilor how they voted, and sent an email Thursday afternoon with the results: Raymond Doherty, Bob Deno and Jim Hinkle voted for Womack, while Ray Corwin and Deacon Perkins voted for Carey.

The council Tuesday night

also approved the first reading of a city law to ban marijuana businesses from operating in the city. The council has spent hours discussing marijuana, marijuana businesses and taking in presentations for and against. The council can vote on the ban at its Dec. 1 meeting.

And council voted to charge a "special hook-on" fee to property owners when they connect to water or sewer mains someone else builds. Pilot Rock resident Jim Hatley extended the sewer main on Northwest Delwood at his expense and asked the city to assess the fee and reimburse him as other property owners connect to that line.

The council also discussed the police department and how fill the chief and officer vacancies. Councilor Deacon Perkins proposed holding a work session to consider options such as contracting with a larger agency for police services, creating housing for police and more. The council voted to hold the work session Dec. 14, at 6 p.m.

And the council cast a unanimous vote to extend a lease with American Tower, which leases ground from the city for a cellular tower. The lease has renewals every five years and expires April 27, 2066. American Tower will pay the city a \$10,000 signing bonus and \$3,443 a month for the lease.

PENDLETON

PDC sharpens goals for the next two years

Wants to improve streets, parking lots, make a festival area

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

With eight years left on the urban renewal district's 20-year term, the Pendleton Development Commission has a lot left to accomplish.

The commission, which is composed of the Pendleton City Council, held a joint meeting Wednesday with its advisory committee and members of the Pendleton Downtown Association to set the commission's goals over the next two years.

At a similar meeting in October, the group identified five goals the commission could work toward in trying to improve the downtown area:

- Increase commercial development and housing in the urban renewal district.
- Develop a strategic plan to resolve the G2 properties held by the commission.
- Improve streets and public parking lots in the downtown area.
- Develop a festival area that could include a year-round farmers market and/or a new home for the existing farmers market.
- Improve gateways, signs and appearance of public parking areas and blighted areas.

At the meeting Wednesday, the group agreed to consolidate the bottom three goals. Jordan McDonald, a member of the advisory committee, also suggested changing the language in the first goal so it puts more emphasis on improving second-story development.

Group members spent most of the meeting discussing the goals and arguing which ones should be the top priority.

The commission recently bought a property at 1825 S.W. Byers Ave., a new addition to the land plots the commission has bought west of the Round-Up Grounds that it has dubbed the G2 properties.

Although the commission has been buying land in that area since 2006, its members have yet to agree on what to do with it.

Councilors reiterated proposals for the property, including a hotel, a housing complex and an equine center.

One of the main challenges of developing the G2 properties is that the properties are not contiguous and some property owners in the area are uninterested in selling.

Councilor Chuck Wood, the commission chairman, said the next step is to commission a \$25,000 feasibility study to determine whether any developments are realistic.

Local hoteliers have warned the commission that a hotel at the G2 properties wasn't feasible, although commission officials

admitted that the hoteliers might have a vested interest in preventing further competition.

Improving streets and parking lots was another idea that gained a lot of traction at the meeting.

Wood specifically identified the public parking lots behind JC Penney, Virgil's at Cimmiyotti's and Crabby's Underground Saloon & Dance Hall as lots in need of attention.

Mayor Phillip Houk said downtown business owners have previously requested the commission address the parking lots, to no avail.

"We gotta bite the bullet and make some improvements there," Houk said.

McDonald said developing the G2 properties might be a better investment. It would bring in more revenue to the urban renewal district through property taxes paid by private development.

"No matter what we do with the G2 properties, whether we build something on it or you sell it, it's going to have the result of increasing the taxes that are coming in on it," McDonald said. "Really, it feeds itself."

Councilor Al Plute argued smaller projects like parking lot repair and gateway signs have their merit, instilling confidence in urban renewal through quick, relatively inexpensive work.

City Planner Evan MacKenzie suggested the commission plant trees at the public parking lot south of the Eagle's Lodge, which would provide shade for parkers in the summer and a potential off-street site for the Pendleton Farmers Market.

Other group members preferred demolishing the Webb's Cold Storage building south of the parking lot and use the land for a farmers market and festival area, an idea Councilor Tom Young thought was "sexy" and potentially popular with the public.

Obstacles to such a project revolve around acquiring and demolishing the severely blighted building.

McDonald brought up the plight of second story developments, many of which are unused or underdeveloped.

Out of all the commission's programs — Jump Start small business loan, facade restoration grant, second-story grant, demolition grant and permit reimbursement — McDonald said the second-story program was the most underutilized.

Commission Associate Director Charles Denight said the commission could make a goal to assist in developing half of the unused second stories, which could cost \$393,750.

Before concluding, meeting attendees volunteered themselves for committees that would take a deeper look at each goal.

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