

PENDLETON: 35 percent of surveyed businesses felt there was not enough parking

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Having taken a step back from his own businesses, Elite Guns & Bows and a property management company, he agreed to do it.

The association was restructured to include a seven-person board with four committees focusing on economic restructuring, design, promotion and organizational structure.

Bradbury helped develop partnerships and recruit dues-paying members, which now include more than 50 businesses across the downtown area.

The association recently obtained nonprofit status and was named a “transforming downtown” level member of the Oregon Main Street Network, which could open up more grant opportunities.

The association has also

spent time compiling plans to address business concerns, like a perceived lack of parking.

“Currently the number of available spaces for customer or tourist parking is reduced by downtown residents’ vehicles, by some business owners who park near their stores and the lack of enforcement of the two hour parking ordinance,” the parking plan states.

With the potential for more second-story development, higher storefront occupancy and the completion of the Rivoli Theater restoration, parking could get more difficult.

A survey of 63 downtown businesses conducted by the association showed 35 percent felt there was not enough parking, making it the highest rated response.

Just under 30 percent



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
The Pendleton Downtown Association is working on a tree plan with the city that would develop rules about care and the types of trees on Main Street.

said something needed to done to limit long-term parking on Main Street and the side streets and more than 20 percent said the city needed to build more public parking lots. In addition to building more parking lots

and enforcing the two-hour rule, the parking plan also recommends quick drop-off parking spots, additional signs directing visitors to longterm parking lots and a transit system from Pendleton’s hotels to the

downtown area.

Another plan addresses tree maintenance, a source of frustration among some business owners.

The plan notes that while the city requires that building owners maintain the trees in front of their properties, many of them are absentee and don’t follow the rules.

Nor does the city’s tree ordinance have enough specificity, the plan states, failing to elaborate on which trees to plant, how they should be irrigated and where they should be located.

The association suggests creating a joint committee with the city to amend the Pendleton tree ordinance to include some of these specifics.

The association isn’t making these plans in a vacuum, having secured the ear of city administration.

Denight said City Manager Robb Corbett has directed him to work with the association as much as possible, as well as members of the Pendleton Development Commission.

The association will need the city’s cooperation if it wants to institute plans like the One Stop program, which would streamline all the required permits, licenses, incentives and other information into one package for prospective business owners.

Bradbury said that is key to recruiting and retaining downtown businesses.

Bradbury hopes to have an intern hired by September, who he thinks will be able to further expand the membership.

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FIRE: District wants to purchase a new Type Six fire engine

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fire district tax rate passed by voters in the spring, increasing from \$1.25 per \$1,000 to \$1.75, the city of Hermiston will lose \$130,000 in revenue to the fire district.

“We know it would be ridiculous to charge (the fire district) \$130,000 a year (to lease the building),” Morgan said. “We’re not trying to bend them over the barrel.” Morgan indicated it was more of a starting point for discussion. He said there has also been conversations to spread the amount out over seven or eight years to lower the payments.

Stanton also updated the board on bond projects, including equipment replacement priorities for this year. The top priority this year is making upgrades to Station 22 on Diagonal Road to make it suitable for 24-hour staffing. Upgrades needed include phone, speakers, computers and other information technology-related projects. Stanton said the IMESD is already working on the upgrades.

Other priorities for the year are purchasing six to eight new sets of personal protec-

tive equipment and a new Type Six fire engine. Type Six fire engines are usually built on a pickup truck frame and can better respond to areas where a traditional engine might struggle. These engines are a good fit for fighting grass fires because they can pump water while driving, where most traditional engines must be in park.

The district also wants to purchase four new cardiac monitors and a new patient transport ambulance. Transport ambulances are usually smaller and quicker vehicles than a traditional ambulance. Decreasing response times is a priority for the new fire district.

With all the proposed updates and purchases, Stanton said the district plans to hold off spending significant money until the tax revenue is received by the district in November.

The process of hiring six full-time firefighter paramedics will begin this fall with the goal of fully staffing the Diagonal Road station by March 1, 2017. The next fire board meeting will be at 7 p.m. Aug. 10 at Station 23 on Westland Road.

DAM: Can remove dam once pipeline project is complete

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\$175,500 grant in May. The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission still needs to approve the grant at its Aug. 5 meeting in Salem, but Jon Staldine, executive director for the watershed council, said their proposal has been well-received.

“They saw it was really a collaborative project,” Staldine said.

The watershed council had already received \$350,000 from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and \$20,000 from the CTUIR to build the pipeline. Staldine said the grant from ODFW will allow them to start construction in November or December, wrapping up by February so farmers can get back to work.

“The pipeline is the key project,” he said. “If that doesn’t happen, the dam won’t be removed.”

Dillon Dam is operated by the Dillon Irrigation Company, which was established in 1897. The company is currently made up of three landowners with approximately 1,400 total acres. Mike Taylor owns the Double M Ranch, the largest of the bunch, and also serves as president of the irrigation company.

Taylor has been talking about getting rid of the Dillon Dam for 15 years before the watershed council took the reigns. He said the Dillon Irrigation Company collects \$10 per acre from landowners, most of which goes toward paying for maintenance at the dam.

Whenever high flows sweep down the river, it washes gravel and debris that plugs up the headgate and fish ladders at the dam. It’s up to the producers to come in and clean up the mess every time. Taylor said they’re looking forward to having a more reliable water delivery system

from the Westland Canal.

“Getting the dam out of the river is a good thing,” Taylor said. “We’ve been working on it for a while.”

Once the pipeline project is complete, the watershed council and tribes can turn their attention to physically removing the dam from the river. Staldine said they are working together on a design and applying for permits, which could take four to six months to be approved.

If all goes smoothly, in-stream construction will take place sometime between July 15 and Sept. 30 of next year. Staldine said they haven’t yet worked out the cost, but said it will be paid for out of the tribes’ Fish Accords with the Bonneville Power Administration.

Dillon Dam was originally built in 1915 and replaced sometime in the mid-1970s. It does have fish and lamprey ladders, though Staldine said they’re nowhere near up to standard. Bill Duke, fish biologist with ODFW in Pendleton, said the dam has been a complete barrier to lamprey in past years, and a partial barrier to salmon.

“In some years, it’s a significant portion of the fall chinook run that gets delayed down there,” Duke said.

Staldine said the problem affects juveniles as well as adult fish stuck below the dam. The likelihood of survival for juveniles reared below the dam are virtually non-existent due to high water temperatures in the summertime, he said.

Yanking the dam will allow more fish, including fall and spring chinook runs, to make it to their traditional spawning grounds farther up the Umatilla River, boosting survival and providing more fishing opportunities.

“We won’t have fish caught below that are essentially getting fried every year,” Staldine said.

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