

MILTON-FREEWATER

Parks tax will go to voters

Aquatic center in need of repairs for leaks, pumps

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The Milton-Freewater City Council had yet to put a local option tax on the ballot to fix the city's sagging parks infrastructure, but members were already worried if it would do any good. The council eventually approved putting a five-year, 37 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value local option tax on the May ballot at a meeting Monday. The measure will raise a maximum of \$100,000 per year for parks and recreation, although the city expects to collect around \$80,000.

City Manager Linda Hall said there isn't enough money in the general fund to cover all of the needs of the park system, which includes an aquatic center, an 18-hole golf course, a skate park, tennis courts, 52 acres spread across 10 locations and more.

"Funding a cop on the street or dispatch center, those have gotten the nod with dollars," she said. "As opposed to swing sets."

One of the priorities under the tax would be the Joe Humbert Family Aquatic Center. Hall said the bottom of the pool needs to be resurfaced to repair leaks, key equipment and features like heat pumps. The largest water slide and the staircase need to be replaced and the bathhouse needs to be repainted.

Hall said patrons often complain about the cold water in the pool, a result of the leaks and the aging heat pumps.

"It's hard to heat a running river," she said.

The 20-plus-year-old aquatic center needs \$230,000 to operate per season, with labor and maintenance costs rising each year.

The rest of the park system has a litany of needs as well: Yantis Park's playground, walking trail and picnic shelters are in need of replacement or repair, Orchard Park needs power outlets for the local farmers market and the municipal golf course requires resurfaced golf cart paths and netting in addition to many other projects.

The councilors had a choice between putting a 37-cent or 46-cent local option



EO file photo
Mike Cleveland of Adams plays a round of golf in this October 2016 photo, at the Milton-Freewater Municipal Golf Course.

"We have a way longer grocery list than we have grocery money."

— Linda Hall,
Milton-Freewater city manager

tax on the ballot, but Hall said neither amount would totally repair the parks system.

"We have a way longer grocery list than we have grocery money," she said.

Amongst the council, members seemed to agree that parks and recreation was in need of more parks funding.

Councilor Steve Irving said the park playgrounds weren't meeting safety codes while Councilor Brad Humbert added that it would cost the city more in the long run to operate a pool in disrepair than it would be to fix it.

"I don't see how we have a choice," Humbert said.

What did give the council pause was the potential for compression, a mechanism that squeezes the general government property tax rate to \$10 per \$1,000 assessed value, regardless of how high the rate actually is.

If Milton-Freewater surpasses that \$10, local option taxes will be the first revenue source eliminated under compression, according to an inter-

view with Umatilla County Director of Assessment and Taxation Paul Chalmers on Tuesday.

While Milton-Freewater is generally under the compression threshold — the general government tax rate ranges between \$7.76 and \$7.82 within city limits — some individual properties with similar real market and assessed values are already feeling the effects of compression.

Milton-Freewater only lost about \$35 to compression in 2017, but Chalmers said a flagging economy could cause a wider trend of real market and assessed values converging, putting more properties under compression.

Further complicating matters is the fact that Milton-Freewater's local option tax proposal will share space with the vote for a new county-wide Oregon State University Extension Service taxing district, which would levy another 33 cents on Milton-Freewater residents. Many local governments try to avoid putting more than one tax measure on the same ballot so that voters don't choose one over another.

Regardless of the obstacles, the Milton-Freewater City Council pressed ahead and voted to put the 37-cent tax on the May ballot.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

Double homicide suspect back to Idaho for trial

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

A double murder suspect arrested in Stanfield in November will return to Idaho for his trial.

Richard Carlin, 73, waived extradition at a court hearing on Monday, allowing him to be taken into custody and returned to the state where charges are pending.

Carlin had been in the Umatilla County Jail since Nov. 22, after he was arrested at the Stanfield Pilot truck stop. He is accused of fleeing Lewiston, Idaho, earlier that morning after police he allege he murdered his ex-wife and daughter and seriously injured his son-in-law.



Carlin

Umatilla County Deputy District Attorney Craig Russell said Carlin signed his waiver of extradition. He said he didn't know when Carlin would depart for Idaho, but authorities would begin the process immediately.

Russell said Carlin did not say anything about why he decided to waive extradition, and that the entire hearing took about five minutes.

"I was fully prepared to go forward with the hearing," Russell said. "I did not know he was going to waive extradition until his lawyer mentioned it."

Carlin, a registered sex offender in Idaho, said in his initial November arraignment that he did not want to be sent back to Idaho because there was no way he would get a fair trial there.

BRIEFLY



Photo contributed by Emily Callender

Cassidy Welch, Kaci Graber and Abel Galvan, Pendleton High School music students, were selected for the 2018 Oregon Music Educator's Association All-State Choir.

PHS Music students receive all-state honors

EUGENE — Pendleton High School music students Cassidy Welch, Kaci Graber and Abel Galvan were recently selected for the 2018 Oregon Music Educator's Association All-State Choir.

Music teacher Emily Callender said the students went through a rigorous and very competitive audition and selection process. The students will be in Eugene this week to rehearse and perform with other outstanding young Oregon musicians under the direction of Amanda Quist for soprano/alto choir (Westminster Choir College), and Joshua Habermann for the tenor/bass choir (Santa Fe Desert Chorale, University of North Texas).

The choir will perform in a gala concert Sunday at 1 p.m. in Silva Concert Hall at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts in Eugene. Tickets are \$17.50 for adults and \$7.50 for youths. Tickets can be purchased in advance at www.hultcenter.org.

NARFE welcomes weather service employee

PENDELTON — Mary Wister of the National Weather Service is the guest speaker for this month's meeting of the National Active and Retired

Federal Employees Chapter 2115.

The no-host meeting is Thursday at 11:30 a.m. at Shari's Cafe & Pies, 319 S.E. Nye Ave., Pendleton. All federal employees are invited to attend.

For more information, call Janet at 541-980-3268. The organization's website is www.narfe.org.

Blood drive set for Jan. 15

HERMISTON — The regular monthly American Red Cross blood drive at Good Shepherd Medical Center is Monday, Jan. 15 from noon to 6 p.m. at 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston.

While walk-ins are welcome, it's helpful for volunteers if people make an appointment, said volunteer Patti Perkins. To schedule a donation time call 800-448-3543.

The Dec. 18 blood drive resulted in 32 units drawn from 40 donors. The canteen was provided by the Good Shepherd Hospital Auxiliary.

Blood products are always in high demand, Perkins said. The need is even greater now due to the onslaught of winter storms and wildfires, which prevents some areas from holding regular donation drives.

For information on how to get involved with local blood drives, contact Perkins at pzperchek@charter.net. For more about the Red Cross, visit www.redcross.org.

HERMISTON

Student leader accepted to Brown University

Heidy Mejia-Puerta a first-generation college student

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian



Contributed photo

Heidy Mejia-Puerta will attend Brown University in the fall. She is a first-generation college student.

school allows undergrads more flexibility in early classes they take before settling on a course of study. A first-generation college student, she said she is unsure of what she'll study, but is interested in law and political science.

She is also the recipient of the Brown University Scholarship, which will cover a significant portion of her tuition.

She credited her admission to the school to taking advantage of resources available

to her, as well as help from teachers and staff.

A member of the LEDA (Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America) scholars program, Mejia-Puerta spent several weeks last summer at Princeton University learning about how to prepare for college applications.

"I think the application process, for me, was much simpler than for a lot of my classmates," she said. "I had a lot of resources and people helping me. But as facilitated as it was, it was still daunting."

She said being involved with LEDA helped, with people from the program continuing to check on her and helping her with the process even after she returned from Princeton.

She also credited her involvement with the Generation College program, run by Hermiston High School staff Melody Bustillos and Roger Berger.

"Most of the opportunities have been thanks to them," she said.

She said her family was excited by the news.

"I think they were a little shocked [...] now that it's actually happening," she

said. "They've been very supportive."

Mejia-Puerta moved from Umatilla to Hermiston High School as a sophomore. She has been involved with the speech and debate team, DECA, Knowledge Bowl club, and the National Honor Society — of which she is now president.

While at Brown, Mejia-Puerta said she hopes to explore academic opportunities, as well as stay in touch with her roots.

"Going away this summer really taught me the importance of my culture," she said. "I realized there aren't always going to be people around me that cook the food I like, celebrate the things I celebrate."

She said she hopes to join a club or group that allows her to continue exploring and learning about her cultural background.

Mejia-Puerta is the sixth LEDA scholar from Hermiston High School since the program was created 13 years ago.

Contact Jayati Ramakrishnan at jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4534

COMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 10
STANFIELD SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Stanfield Community Center, 225 W. Roosevelt, Stanfield. Cost is \$3.50 for seniors, \$6 for others. (541-449-1332)

PENDELTON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12-1 p.m., Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St., Pendleton. Costs \$3.50 or \$6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101)

ADULT BEGINNERS' COMPUTERS, 3-4 p.m., Pendleton Public Library meeting room, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Registration is required. Classes tailored to the needs of the attendees. (541-966-0380)

VEGAN/SUSTAINABLE LIVING POTLUCK SUPPER, 7 p.m., location varies, Pendleton. Bring a vegan dish and recipe. Gluten-free friendly group. Call to RSVP and for driving directions. (541-969-3057)

THURSDAY, JAN. 11
WALKING FOR WELLNESS, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center gymnasium, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Good music, new friends and indoor walking for health. Free. (541-276-8100)

10:15-11 a.m., Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Stories and activities for young children. (541-966-0380)

PRESCHOOL STORY AND CRAFT TIME, 10:30 a.m., Milton-Freewater Public Library, 8 S.W. Eighth Ave., Milton-Freewater. (Lili Schmidt 541-938-8247)

HERMISTON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church parish hall, 565 W. Hermiston Ave., Hermiston. Cost is \$4 for adults, free for children 10 and under, \$4 for Meals on Wheels. Extra 50 cents for utensils/dishes. Bus service to parish hall by donation. (541-567-3582)

BOARDMAN SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St., Boardman. Cost is \$4 for seniors 55 and over or \$5 for adults. (541-481-3257)

PENDELTON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12-1 p.m., Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St., Pendleton. Costs \$3.50 or \$6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101)

SENSORY STORY TIME, 12:30 p.m., Boardman Public Library, 200 S. Main St., Boardman. For children from birth to age 4. (541-481-2665)

Islam & Christianity IN BIBLE PROPHECY

UNDERSTAND BIBLE PROPHECY

Tim Roosenberg
Speaker and Author

Indeed, the face of Western Europe has already been transformed through rapid Islamic expansion, and the fear of terror and holy war pervade the American psyche as multiple conflicts rage in the Middle East.

After a decade of careful study and scholarly legwork, international speaker Tim Roosenberg unveils a staggering new study of Bible prophecy that demonstrates that God's Word is not silent regarding Islam and Christianity in these last days.

Hermiston Seventh-day Adventist Church
855 W. Highland Ave.
ALL FAITH GROUPS WELCOME
Saturday, January 13, 6:30 –8:00 pm "Islam and Christianity" Part I
Sunday, January 14, 6:30—8:00 pm "Islam and Christianity" Part II