

HERMISTON

Quilt a reminder of life-saving organ donation

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

A quilt on display at the Hermiston DMV this week is a reminder of the life-saving power of organ donation. Phil Weitz of Hermiston had his life saved by a heart transplant, and he is one of the people featured on the quilt, part of a program called “Threads of Life.”

“I had a heart transplant six years ago, and I’ve never lost passion for awareness of what people can do,” he said.

Each square on the quilt represents an organ recipient from Oregon. Donate Life Northwest, which encourages organ donation in the Pacific Northwest, gathers stories and photos for a quilt each year and then sends the quilt on a tour around Oregon and southwest Washington to remind people they can potentially save eight lives through organ donation. The quilt also comes with a book of stories about those featured on the quilt.

Weitz’s life-saving moment came in 2012, when at age 56 he had a heart attack. He called 9-1-1 to report he had trouble breathing, and woke up at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane needing a battery-powered pump to keep his heart going. Almost two months later he was able to receive the heart of a 50-year-old farm worker from California who died after falling and hitting his head at work.

The ordeal changed his



Contributed photo by Phil Weitz

The Threads of Life quilt is on display at the Hermiston DMV this week.

life, Weitz said. He made new friends, including the daughter of his organ donor, the medical professionals who cared for him and the fellow organ recipients that he has met through support groups in the area. He said he is working on convincing some of his other recipients to join his crusade to educate people about organ donation, and some of them have appeared in recent parades, including the Umatilla County Fair parade and

the Pendleton Round-Up Dress-Up parade.

“A lot of people, I think they’re proud, but also shy,” he said.

Weitz isn’t shy about talking about his gratitude for his heart and about the importance of organ donation. He said 120,000 people in the country are waiting for one of the eight life-saving organs a person can give — lungs, kidneys, liver, intestines and pancreas.

“Twenty people die a

day waiting for life-saving organs,” he said. “I waited six weeks.”

To learn more about organ donation or to register as a potential organ donor, visit donatelifenw.org. You can also register at the DMV or call 1-800-452-1369 to request a paper form. Anyone older than 13 can register.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

HERMISTON

City council planning to restructure water and sewer rates, could see hikes

One plan would decrease cost for ‘regular’ users, increase for some

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Hermiston City Council is planning to restructure water and sewer rates in October.

The city’s infrastructure committee has been working with engineers from Anderson Perry to create a capital improvement plan and look at how to raise revenue for needed maintenance on water and sewer infrastructure. The consensus is that more money is needed to continue operations; the question is the best way to structure rates to get there.

“We want to make sure each utility can cover their current and forecast expenditures, and we want to make sure it’s fair,” said Dave Wildman of Anderson Perry, during an hour-long discussion of water and sewer rates Monday.

All rate structures Anderson Perry staff came up with assume an annual rate increase of three percent per year to keep up with inflation after the initial restructure.

On the water side, the first option would be an increase of the base rate from \$19.82 per month to \$20. Currently users are charged \$1.25 per 1,000 gallons after 13,000 gallons but the first option would charge \$2.50 per 1,000 gallons past 15,000 gallons. The result would be that a “regular user” of 20,000 gallons would see their bill go down slightly from \$44.48 to \$40, while a large user (65,000 gallons) would see their bill increase from \$100.73 to \$152.50.

The second option is similar but increases the base rate to \$24.50, keeping a “regular” user at about the same as their current bill.

The third option raises base rates to \$30 and everything over 15,000 gallons to \$3.50, bumping a 20,000-per-month user to \$55 a month.

Wildman said the city has been mixing water and

sewer finances together, and since it began paying off the debt service for the new wastewater treatment plant built in 2014 the water side has been subsidizing the sewer side.

For sewer the city currently charges a flat rate of \$27.25 for all residential users, and for commercial users charges a base rate of \$29.66 plus \$1.50 per 1,000 over 5,000 gallons. Options presented to the council include keeping residential rates the same but raising commercial, or upping the base rate to \$30 for all users, with a \$1 per 1,000 gallon charge for residential and \$2 per 1,000 for commercial. Another option would feature a \$36 base rate with \$2.75 per 1,000 fee for all users, or \$30 base rate with \$4.10 per 1,000 rate for all users.

Rates for residential users of 5,000 gallons would remain \$27.25 under the first option, be \$35 under the second option, \$49.75 under the third option and \$50.50 under the fourth.

For both water and sewer, councilors said they liked the idea of a structure that focuses on raising charges on heavy usage instead of the base rate. Councilor John Kirwan said it didn’t seem fair, for example, that currently a person living alone and generating very little wastewater is subsidizing a family with multiple teenagers.

Mayor David Drotzmann said raising the base rate tends to affect smaller users such as seniors on a fixed income, and focusing more on usage fees gives people the power to lower their own bills through conservation.

“It gives people more control,” he said.

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan noted that when doing rate comparisons with similarly sized cities or the largest cities in Oregon, Hermiston is consistently in the “bottom five to 10 percent” on rates, and any of the rate restructures the city is considering would still keep it on the lower side of the spectrum. He said the city council should see a formal recommendation to vote on during the council’s Oct.

8 meeting.

Other business

During Monday’s regular meeting, the council voted to use a bid-design-build process for new construction at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

City Manager Byron Smith said in his experience with construction projects, if a project is designed and then put out to bid, often the contractor that comes in will disagree with elements of the design, causing delays and budget increases as the architect/engineer and contractor go back and forth. He said he believes the method of putting out a request for proposals that includes design and construction has the potential to save the city money and time.

When Umatilla County and the city parted ways on EOTEC, the city agreed to pay half the cost of a new building containing office and storage space for the Umatilla County Fair, up to \$250,000. Smith said the city plans to have that building complete in time for next year’s fair.

A top priority for the venue is also improving the RV park behind the event center, which currently has “very limited infrastructure” for 4-H and FFA students who stay there during fair week. Smith said fully developing the RV area will open it up to potential year-

round use that could generate revenue for the city.

The city council voted to approve the bid-design-build process, and the city plans to put out a request for proposals as soon as possible.

On Monday the council also approved a contract for Gorge Aviation Services to become the new manager of the Hermiston Municipal Airport.

Morgan said Hermiston Aviation Services has always done an excellent job for the city but they are ready to get out of the business. Gorge Aviation was managing the airport for The Dalles (located across the river in Daldessport, Wash.) until a recent split in the company. Morgan said they were the only ones to respond to the city’s request for proposals but the airport committee was excited about what they are bringing to the table. He said they have a reputation for good customer service and increasing fuel sales for airports.

They recently brought their airplane repair shop to Hermiston and Morgan said that has already resulted in a bump in fuel sales to customers who followed them to Hermiston.

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STANFIELD

‘Dangerous’ property must be demolished

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The owner of the Stanfield property where police and volunteers rescued 35 dogs has until Sept. 18 to get rid of the single-wide trailer.

Stanfield City Manager Blair Larsen said the council unanimously voted last week to declare the property dangerous and have the owner demolish it.

“It is really the only option that makes any sense,” Larsen said.

The city hired Hawkins Interior Services of Hermiston to inspect the single-wide trailer and property at 230 Lucy St. and report on the conditions in the wake of news stories about the Aug. 20 raid on the home that resulted in four arrests, placing two children into protective custody and seizing the dogs and one cat. The inspection found a multitude of problems, from leaking roofs to improperly installed porches to interior mold and exposed electrical wires. The inspection report also noted feces on the floors, shelves and counter tops, which jibes with animal rescuer accounts of the unsafe and unsanitary and conditions in the home.

The report recommended removing the trailer, and Larsen said the council took its action based on the report.

Husband and wife Richard Ruiz, 47, and Martina Ruiz, 48, lived there. They face 37 counts of animal abuse. They had a pro-

ceeding Tuesday morning in Umatilla County Circuit Court, Hermiston, and their next appearance in court is Oct. 16.

Andrade Conrado owns the land and the trailer, according to Umatilla County tax records, which has an assessed value of \$33,380. But Larsen reported Conrado is dead, and his son, Jesus Rubio, is executor of the estate. The *East Oregonian* did not find contact information for Rubio.

He nor a representative was at the fateful council meeting, Larsen said, but he spoke to Rubio before the meeting, and the man mentioned his family recommended removing the trailer.

“But since then, I haven’t had any contact with him,” Larsen said. “We haven’t been able to get through on the phone or in person. ... We haven’t gotten any response.”

Likewise, the notices the city placed on the Lucy Street site have drawn only silence, Larsen said.

Rubio has until Sept. 18 at 5 p.m. to demolish the home. Larsen said if Rubio does not, the city will have to hire a contractor to take on the work and charge Conrado for the cost.

“We would much rather people take care of their own properties,” Larsen said. “It’s really frustrating. There’s no guarantee the city will be made whole.”

He also said this process is “really the last resort” for any city, but the scales come down on the side of protecting the public.

BRIEFLY

Sheriff’s deputy rescues suicidal woman from river

BOARDMAN — A Morrow County Sheriff’s deputy pulled a suicidal woman out of the Columbia River on Monday.

According to a press release from the sheriff’s office, dispatch received a report at 3:19 p.m. of a woman who was possibly suicidal on her way to the Columbia River in Boardman.

Officers from Boardman police and the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office began looking for her, and Mike Cahill, the marine deputy for the sheriff’s office, prepared to take a patrol boat out at Sailboard Beach in Boardman.

While he was getting the boat ready, Cahill saw a woman in the water 50-75 yards offshore, swimming deeper into the river with waves swelling three to four feet and visible white caps. Cahill decided there wasn’t enough time to launch the boat and instead began swimming toward the woman.

Cahill saw the woman go underwater twice, and by the time he reached her she had been underwater for a few seconds. He got hold of her arms and told her he was a

deputy and wanted to take her back to shore, and she began to try to get away.

Cahill secured the woman, and as he was bringing her back to shore she was begging him to let her go. The deputy continued to struggle to get her to shore, working against the water, wind, current and the woman.

After about 10 minutes, Cahill brought the woman into waist-deep water. Boardman Police Chief Rick Stokoe and officer Martin Martinez arrived to help bring her the rest of the way to shore.

Motorcyclist killed near Antelope

ANTELOPE — Oregon State Police reported a Lake Oswego man died Sunday afternoon near Antelope when he crashed his motorcycle.

Two motorcycles were traveling together northbound on Highway 218, according to state police, when operator Gabriel Spaccarelli, 44, became distracted, traveled off the road and into a field. The bike crashed. Spaccarelli suffered fatal injuries and died at the scene.

State police and personnel from the Fossil Volunteer Fire Department and Oregon Department of Transportation responded to the scene.



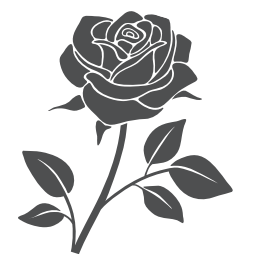
WILDHORSE
RESORT & CASINO

9/12
Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie
Today • 12pm • 3:10 to Yuma

THE NUN [R] 4:40 7:00 9:20
CRAZY RICH ASIANS [PG13] 4:10 6:50 9:30
THE MEG [PG13] 4:50 7:20 9:50
ALPHA [PG13] 4:30 6:40
MILE 22 [R] 7:10 9:40
MAMMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN [PG-13] 4:20
SLENDER MAN [PG-13] 10:00

* Matinee Pricing
wildhorseresort.com • 541-966-1850
Pendleton, OR I-84 - Exit 216



Dear
Jennifer Lynne
10/26/62-9/13/09

We will always miss you.

We love you,
Mom & Dad,
Melissa, Andrea
& Matthew
and the six grandchildren
you never got to know



19th Annual Quilt Show

September 14 - 16, 2018
Walla Walla, WA

Fri-Sat 10-5 & Sun 10-3
Admission: \$6.00 (good all 3 days)

Beautiful Quilts - Hourly Demonstrations
Vendors Mall - Silent Auction
2018 Quilt Challenge: Booville
Cash Prizes: 1st, 2nd & 3rd

Featured Quilter:
Teresa Silva

Walla Walla Fairgrounds
360 Orchard Street, Walla Walla, Washington
www.wallawallaquiltfestival.org