

WHEN WATERS

RISE

Neighborhood group trying to stop another McKay flood



Mark Mulvihill stands on a gravel bar formed by McKay Creek. When Mulvihill grew up in the neighborhood, he would have been standing in the creek instead of on a bar with vegetation growing on it.

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

When Mark Mulvihill returned to Pendleton's McKay Creek neighborhood three years ago, he consulted with the Federal Emergency Management Agency while building

his house. After keeping his house and workshop away from the creek and deciding against building a basement at his Southwest Kirk Avenue property, he was assured that nothing like the 1991 McKay Creek flood would happen again.

The line of dead grass where the creek nipped at his backyard more

than a month ago acts as evidence that those assurances weren't enough.

The April flooding along McKay Creek that put Community Park underwater and flooded area basements and yards has long ago dried, but it's still on the minds of some of its residents.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

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Urban renewal funds for Pendleton streets remains issue

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The Pendleton Development Commission faces a decision over injecting urban renewal funds into repairing the city's deteriorating streets.

The commission, which consists of the members of the city council, met Tuesday evening to hash out the matter in a work session. Pendleton Mayor John Turner stepped into chair the meeting, starting with city attorney Nancy Kerns' legal opinion the commission could spend money on street repair and maintenance but not on rebuilding.

Just what constitutes a street rebuild, however, was another question. No one from the city's public works department was present to give input, and councilors did not settle on an answer. Turner asked City Manager Robb Corbett, who doubles as the commission's executive director, if he had an opinion.

Corbett's response: "No."

Corbett has proposed a 10-year plan to get all city streets to good condition. The project comes with a \$41 million price tag. Part of his plan includes using \$3 million in urban renewal funds. The one-time expenditure would go into the upcoming 2019-20 fiscal year and leave the city with the need to raise a total of \$21.4 million over the decade.

Throw out the \$3 million, Corbett said, and the city has to make up that much more.

That also would step the city even deeper into the political minefield of raising fees or passing new taxes to cover the project cost, all of which could be part of the city's big picture for the funding.

Councilor Becky Marks urged the rest of the council to read the original 2003 urban renewal plan. She said one objective of the urban renewal district was to make Pendleton pedestrian friendly, yet she agreed the plan does not outright prohibit street repairs. Turner pointed out the plan indeed includes street repairs.

"But," Marks countered, "it doesn't say we can pave all of Byers."

Councilor Paul Chalmers said properties on better streets can have higher tax value, so there is an incentive to invest the funds in the road work.

Turner said this comes down to the development commission answering two questions at its next public meeting: Does it agree or not it can spend urban renewal money on street repair, and, if so, how much?

Graduation quilt pieces together memories of basketball career

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Cole Smith's graduation present tells a story.

Each square of the king-sized quilt made by his grandmother is made of a different T-shirt or jersey from a different basketball tournament or team.

A black square with the Las Vegas logo represents a trip in fourth grade to a tournament in Sin City. Purple squares show off different Bulldogs mottos throughout the years. A blue square reads "Best of the West" — a hometown tournament, and one of Smith's favorites.

Now instead of a box of old, too-small T-shirts he has an easy way to take those memories with him wherever he heads off to next.

"I liked the idea," he said. "I thought it would be good to look

back on."

The quilt was his mom Cheri Smith's idea. She got his grandmother Erin Chowning to do the sewing, and Chowning enlisted the help of longtime friend Shawn Lockwood to help with the quilting part.

It was Lockwood who taught Chowning how to quilt. Neither of them had ever tried to do a T-shirt quilt before, but with the skills they already had and some hints from YouTube tutorials they figured it out.

"It was so much easier than I thought it would be," Chowning said.

The project, with 40 different squares, took about three weeks to complete.

Lockwood said she has been quilting her whole life, but this was

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Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Shawn Lockwood, left, and Erin Chowning, center, made a quilt for Chowning's grandson Cole Smith, right, for graduation using his old basketball T-shirts.