

Digital (cont.) from 8A

because our community said, "Yes, we want to support our schools."

Following a vote in favor of the school's general obligation bond, a perfect storm of funding and fiber transformed a tiny district with outdated infrastructure into an educational paragon of modernity.

"Our community was gracious enough to pass a \$4 million bond," she said. "And then we in turn got a \$4 million matching grant from the state of Oregon and then on top of that we received a \$1.5 million seismic grant for the elementary and a \$1.5 million seismic grant for the high school."

The influx of funding allowed for badly needed infrastructure renovations to begin last spring, which also opened the door for high-grade Cat 6A Ethernet cables and new wireless access points to be installed.

Then, in a fortuitous turn, months of working with Lane ESD to bring better internet to Mapleton ended in a pleasant surprise when collaboration between CenturyLink and Lane ESD saw fiber installed to dispel the district's bandwidth woes.

While the bond and grants massively helped the district commit to its infrastructural needs, O'Mara adds that the fiber alone would have been an enormous boon to the schools' classroom integrity.

The funding to upgrade partnered with the introduction of fiber, Mapleton School District's bandwidth issues were virtually eradicated, which freed teachers to take full advantage of classroom devices and tools, turning

the district into nothing short of a success story.

Though the Mapleton district was the recipient a fortunate series of events, bringing schools up to date is more than just a roll of the dice. Grant writers and tenaciousness go a long way and much of a school's good fortune starts with community support for bonds. O'Mara believes the funding is there to create more success stories like hers.

"I think there's a big push in the state of Oregon for access to technology," she said. "We've had some great grants given to us through Western Lane Community Foundation and Mapleton Community Foundation that have helped to provide for some of those tablets and get technology in the hands of kids."

Upgrading a school's technology, however, is only one among many considerations as officials contemplate the flow of funds. Siuslaw High School, for example, is marked for potential replacement and ongoing deliberations over the school's long-term outlook have waylaid other development ideas. An investment in technical infrastructure now lacks appeal.

"We've delayed doing it just because we know we've got the new high school potentially coming up," said Grzeskowiak, "and so spending the money to do it now wouldn't necessarily be a wise use of the funds."

Doing nothing is not an attractive option, either. As it stands, the school's current infrastructure puts a cap on its technological capacity.

"We're limited on several fronts," Grzeskowiak said. "Just because of the way that building is designed ... running wiring is

a problem — and on top of that we're kind of maxed out for our electrical capacity."

In order to update any further, Grzeskowiak is faced with a simple obstacle of logistics. "We physically don't have the space for it," he said. "We've got transformers in buildings that are at capacity. We cannot build up any more."

If the new high school does get built, there are plans to establish it as the district's new technology infrastructure hub, running a district-wide digital system for phones, intercoms and bell systems.

Building a new school and streamlining such a system, however, doesn't come cheap.

A general obligation bond for construction projects is anticipated for May, though the school board hasn't formally approved a project list or project amount yet. While a new high school is the primary concern, seismic projects at the elementary and mechanical improvements for the middle school are also under review.

"The reality is, commercial construction is not getting cheaper," said Grzeskowiak.

Moreover, public entities such as schools must meet higher standards than residential construction projects — and higher standards mean higher costs.

Regardless of how May's vote turns out, Grzeskowiak's main concern with the high school lies in meeting modern standards by giving the high school the infrastructure and technology to "do collaborative workgroups so kids can participate in meaningful effective discussion that leads to critical thinking, synthesis and analysis," he said. "And to make sure every class happens in a

classroom," referring to classes that have been relegated to smaller rooms due to lack of space.

THE DIGITAL FUTURE

Providing the adequate environment for these goals involves not just increasing space, but increasing the number and quality of devices that can be placed in students' hands. Future educational environments will likely demand more hi-tech access and both superintendents see greater integration of technology in the future.

Ideally, O'Mara is looking to achieve a one-to-one student-to-notebook ratio for grades above elementary, which could possibly enable students to take devices home with them after school.

Grzeskowiak also envisions this kind of digital immersion. "Our education foundation just wrote a grant for us and we're looking to try to go one-to-one Chromebook/notebook for all kids grades four through 12," he said.

The Siuslaw district has also purchased a learning management system that interfaces with the school information system. In effect, every student has a records profile, which is linked to their teacher's profile, which has all of their class records and grades.

"It's meant to be a one-stop shop for teacher planning, grade submission and then student notes and ... assignment submission as well," said Grzeskowiak. "So if you miss class, the notes are there. The videos are there. You can submit your homework through there. If you miss a quiz, you can log on and take the quiz."

The convenience to teachers and students is intended to be matched with off-campus bene-

fits as well. "It takes a lot of the paper out of the system," said Grzeskowiak, "and makes it an easy check for parents instead of 'Hey, where's your homework? You didn't bring it home.' A parent could then download that piece to do at home."

Future developments in the tech industry will also urge schools to keep pace not just as an advantage, but a necessity. Subjects such as science, business and computer technology often have little choice but to match modern standards.

Before its upgrades began, Mapleton School District had fallen short of those standards, but O'Mara feels they are on the cusp of meeting the definition of a modern school system, especially once remodeling of the high school is finished.

For Siuslaw, "We're close, but we're not all the way there yet," said Grzeskowiak. The district has adopted a somewhat patchwork method as funds are made available, picking a couple classrooms a year and building the infrastructure as needed.

Seamlessly integrating upgrades into an infrastructure that lacks physical capacity, however, remains Grzeskowiak's main concern.

The future of technology in the classroom points to more robust and integrated applications.

The U.S. Department of Education itself endorses a model of embracing technology in such forms as online classes, digital textbooks and games which inspire critical thinking. Resources and possible applications abound on a horizon that may only end with an educator's creativity.

Though it's hard to accurately

forecast the applications of classroom technology in years to come, O'Mara and Grzeskowiak agree smartphones will see more use in the classroom setting.

"It would be nice to see it become an educational tool," said O'Mara. "Because most students have it and those that don't would then have access to one through the school."

"The classroom computer became the glorified typewriter. And then the computer became the glorified presentation machine," said Grzeskowiak. "In essence you're going to see the phone become more than just a glorified computer and that's really the next kind of evolution in this."

If change truly is the only constant, it's evident the coming generations must be equipped to face it.

Modest improvements to the classroom have their place, but addressing leaps of progress in an increasingly technologically-dependent society will require forward-thinking educators, well-equipped classrooms and, as in Mapleton's case, community support.

Striking the right balance between the digital and analog world will be an ever-present responsibility for teachers and parents alike as technology becomes more immersive and potentially less interpersonal.

"It is funny, too, though," Timpe said about her Mapleton Elementary School students. "You do have the occasional person who does not enjoy it. And they'll be like, 'Can I read my book instead?'"

She added optimistically, "And that's okay!"

SVFR from 1A

districts' overall finances, initiated after payroll irregularities were brought to light by members of the Western Lane Ambulance District.

Recent staff changes were connected to the issues raised by the EMTs, and according to

Chief Director Langborg, Mahr was preparing the information gathered during his audit to present to both boards and needed an additional month to finalize his report.

Langborg has assured directors Mahr has not found any examples of malfeasance, simply improperly handled transactions.

The audit update was listed as an

agenda item for both boards and the delay was accepted from all directors with few comments.

Langborg then mentioned that all administrative functions for the WLAD had been shifted to the main SVFR Station. This transition had gone smoothly, according to Langborg.

The department presentations to the SVFR board continued

with an update on software upgrades and acknowledgement from Director Green that the software was similar to what he has and used at OPB.

Director Hickson added the software was "Easy to use and it didn't take long to figure out how to navigate from one screen to another."

Langborg then advised the board the district's civil service position had been reclassified and filled by an internal promotion. He also advised the directors the district would be switching over to a new payroll service, ADP, and would be utilizing ADP's time keeping and HR management tools moving forward.

Langborg next responded to a concern expressed by a member of the public in a previous meeting. The question posed during the public comment section of last month's meeting asked for the costs to the tax payers of Florence that were associated with Mahr's audit.

Langborg stated the total costs incurred to this point were approximately \$2,650, with a slight increase in expenditures possible as the payroll correction situation was nearing completion. Langborg also told the directors that negotiations were set to begin with union Local 851 and requested directors decide which board members would participate in the negotiations.

Perhaps the most interesting information shared at Wednesday's meeting was provided by Chief of Operations, Jim Dickerson, who reported on the year's statistics for the calls SVFR had responded. The comprehensive data presented was the subject of a short discussion among the directors.

Dickerson pointed out the majority of calls for assistance were received on Saturday and Sunday, the two days the district was not staffed.

He added that there were many more calls for medic services than for fire response, but highlighted the higher degree of danger and damage that fire calls entail.

Dickerson's report also stated, "Many of our calls, in fact, 44.62 percent, are rescue and EMS based. As we look towards the nature of calls that we respond to and activation of the emergency responders, SVFR must meet the expectations of the residents and visitors. The data suggests that we train at least once per month on the EMS/Rescue side of emergency response."

The numbers presented by Dickerson for 2017 were consistent with previous years, with a slight upward trend evident.

Total call volume was 493, with an average response time of 10 minutes per roll out.

Only eight and a half percent of calls were for fires and five percent were for dangerous situations that were not fire related.

Dickerson pointed out that in the future, staffing changes might have to be made to reflect the high percentage of calls that come in on the weekend.

Reports were entered into the record from Recruitment and Retention Coordinator Pete Warren, Chaplain Lori Severance, Interim Fire Prevention Officer Tony Miller, SVFR Captain Andy Gray and Training Officer Jeff Larson.

The board then approved paying the monthly bills for the district which totaled \$276,288.

The WLAD Board meeting was held at noon on Thursday. The first order of business was

the swearing in of a new full time member of WLAD, Ben Taylor.

Following Taylor's ceremonial induction, much of the same information that was discussed at the SVFR meeting was repeated to the WLAD Board.

There was a quorum present, but Director Yecny and Operations Chief Matt House were not in attendance.

The shift of location for administrative personnel from WLAD to SVFR Station 2 was the first topic to be mentioned and the new software roll out as well as the shift to ADP for payroll services was recapped for the board.


Director Farnsworth then stated he had received the information he had requested during the Dec. meeting regarding overtime expenditures and the situation had been clarified to his satisfaction.

"I did receive the overtime analysis and it makes much more sense in the new format. As we continue to sharpen our budget process, these issues will be addressed, and the information provided to the board will be clearer and easier to understand."

Statistics from 2017 were entered into the record showing WLAD had responded to 3,176 calls.

There were few questions from the directors regarding the information presented and was the digital report from House were entered into the record.

Department reports detailing budget were received from Chief Langborg and Chaplain Severance with little discussion and the members approved expenditures of \$296,224 to cover the district's monthly bills and adjourned the meeting.



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KEY PERSONNEL & VOLUNTEERS

The Friends of the FEC Volunteers & On Call Volunteers
Reedsport, Mapleton, and Siuslaw Elementary School Educators
Marty Adams, The Flo-Tones, and the WMF Gospel Group
Dolly Brock, Donna Mlinek, Paul Pearson, Ken Janowski, Burney Garelick
Charley Thompson & Janet Wellington, Jam Session Organizers
Jesus Peralta, Shannon Hunt, & the Pavilion Catering Crew

Cassandra Caputo, Judy
Caputo & SK Lindsey for Social Media
Bob Macduffee & Volunteers for The Pie Sale
Kevin Rhodes & the FEC Staff
Pete and Trina Yoakum for five days of Sound Engineering

Bonnie Macduffee our FFEC Treasurer and Guardian Angel
Margaret McDiarmid
&
Lighting Crew
Claudia Brown,
FRAA Artisan Fair Coordinator
Co-producer Howie Cusack who created
the Gospel Gathering and so much more
Kirk Mlinek and Rachel Pearson, Co-Producers
Leah Goodwin & the "Ladies in Black Plus 1" Stage Crew
And you, our **Wonderful Patrons and Ticket Buyers**, who made our dreams for
2018 come true in such grand fashion...

THANK YOU ALL, AND SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

Shooting from 1A

was uncooperative and in possession of a firearm.

Martinez was shot and immediately transported to a local hospital, where he later died.

There were multiple addresses on file for Martinez, with his last known residence listing a home in Deadwood. However, when asked, no area residents could recall Martinez living in the area.

"We go by addresses in our system," said Sergeant Carrie Carver of the Lane County Sheriff's Office. "If we haven't had contact with him for some time, it might not have been current."

Following up on the possibility of a second occupant prior to the incident, several local agencies canvassed the area near the shooting and interviewed potential witnesses.

The investigation led to the identity of a "home of interest" in the same 500 block, where authorities attempted to make contact with residents inside.

Several people exited the home and were questioned by police, which led to the identity of a second man who had been an occupant of the vehicle but was not involved in the incident.

The man is cooperating with the Lane County Interagency Deadly Force Investigation Team (IDFIT), which is comprised of law enforcement offi-

cers from multiple agencies tasked with investigating deadly force events in Lane County.

Due to the ongoing nature of the investigation, the passenger is not being identified at this time.

Responding agencies included Oregon State Police, the Eugene Police department, The Cottage Grove Police Department, the Springfield Police Department, the Florence Police Department, Santa Clara Rural Fire, and the Eugene/Springfield Fire Department.

An update will be issued after the District Attorney's Office has reviewed the case.