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BEYOND THE GROVE

Impactful news from Lane County and surrounding communities

Water rate debate heats up

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Registered voters in Creswell will have a decision to make next week, one that could profoundly affect the way they pay for their water.

On Tuesday, Sept. 15, voters will weigh the outcome of two competing ballot measures. Measure 20-233 aims to limit the annual amount that water rates may increase in Creswell to the annual rise in the cost of living, or the Consumer Price Index (CPI), adding that any increase above that amount would necessitate a public vote. The measure is being championed by Jacob Daniels, a former Creswell City Councilor who resigned in 2014 after loudly disagreeing with the adoption of the 2014-15 budget.

According to the Creswell Chronicle, Daniels began collecting signatures to place Measure 20-233 on the ballot last fall after the Council approved rate increases of four, eight and eight percent that would take place in January of 2015, July of 2015 and again in January of 2016. (Daniels could not be contacted by the Sentinel for this article).

In a response to Daniels' measure,

Concerning Creswell

News and notes from our neighbor to the north

The Creswell City Council drafted Measure 20-234, which would amend the City Charter to set up a new system for analyzing potential rate increases, including the formation of an auditory committee and public hearings to be held before an increase is enacted.

It's an issue that has drawn fierce debate from both sides, debate that has spilled over from one to two pages of opinion in the "Chronicle" and that often finds supporters of both sides demonstrating and handing out information in support of their views downtown.

Mayor David Stram has been an outspoken opponent of 20-233 and supporter of 20-234, having penned five articles in recent editions of the Chronicle. While Stram acknowledged that he's more likely to hear comments in support of his position, he said that 80 percent of the feedback he's heard so far has been positive. Still, that support doesn't mean Stram knows how the election will turn out.

"I wouldn't want to predict the outcome," he said. "Measure 20-234 is our measure; we voted 6-1 that this is what we think is a better

way for Creswell, so of course I'll go out and stump for it."

Stram said he has concerns that the CPI is "not a measurement of what's really happening in any community."

"It doesn't reflect the reality of Creswell," he said. Stram said that, in contrast to those who believe their rates have steadily increased, water rates have increased just half of one percent over the last five years.

"We didn't realize that until 2014, and we realized that the CPI would not be doable in Creswell," he said, adding that he doesn't think "there's a chance in the world that people would voluntarily raise their water rates."

Measure 20-234 would create "five layers of decision-making" that Stram said is a "lot better process for setting rates."

The people of Creswell have a "gut reaction" to talk of rate increases, Stram said, with many feeling that government is raising rates for its own "evil purposes." He said the issue has meant "a lot of destructiveness" and a step backward for the public conversation.

Rabid bat bites Creswell man

CRESWELL, ORE— Officials from Lane County Public Health (LCPH) have received laboratory confirmation from the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at Oregon State University of a rabies-infected bat which had previously bitten a man in Creswell.

On Sept. 2, Lane County Environmental Health received a report that a man living in Creswell was bitten by a bat. The bat was captured and sent to the lab, where tests confirmed the bat was positive for rabies. The Lane County Department of Health and Human Services said the man has begun a four-part prophylaxis regimen since this time.

"The real public health message here is to avoid wild animals and for pet owners to make certain their dogs and cats are vaccinated against rabies. When our pets are protected from rabies, it provides a buffer zone of immune animals between humans and rabid wild animals, such as bats," says Dr. Patrick Luedtke, Lane County Health Officer.

While bats help control insect populations, including mosquitoes, they are the primary reservoir of rabies in our wild animal communities. Thus far this year in Oregon, 12 animals have tested positive for rabies; all were bats.

Lane County residents and veterinarians should be aware that other animals could be exposed to the rabies virus and should, therefore, be alert to potential signs of the disease. Rabies is a viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and mammals. It is almost 100 percent fatal once symptoms begin. The virus is carried in the saliva of an infected animal; transmission can occur when that animal bites, or in rare instances, scratches another animal or person. If bitten by a bat the wound should be immediately and thoroughly cleaned with soap and water. In addition, medical attention should be sought. Finally, if easily accomplished, the bat should be captured and the event reported to the Lane County Public Health department.

There are several strains of rabies found in the U.S. (e.g., bat, skunk, fox, raccoon) but only bat rabies is found in Oregon. Other animals that have tested positive for rabies in Oregon have contracted it from bats. People should stay away from bats and not handle them.

To protect citizens and pets, Lane County Public Health recommends the following:

- Vaccinate your pets (dogs and cats) against rabies
- Do not handle bats with bare hands
- Watch wildlife from a distance. Do not approach or attempt to handle wild animals.
- Do not feed wild animals
- Keep garbage in secure containers and away from wildlife
- Feed pets indoors
- Seal openings in attics, basements, porches, sheds, barns and screen chimneys that might provide access to bats and other wildlife

LORANE COUNTRY NEWS

BY LIL THOMPSON
For the Sentinel

School is back in session in all grades. Welcome back, staff and students. Here's to a great year. Please watch for students along the road waiting for buses and for buses stopping. Everyone must stop in both directions while red lights are flashing. Our days will soon be shortening and mornings will be darker, so please slow down between 7 and 8:30 a.m. Keep our children safe!

Crow Booster Club's annual car show is this Saturday. It is one of their biggest fundraisers.

It is finally here — the Lorane

Celebration 2015 is this Saturday, Sept. 12. The day begins with an "eye opener" walk starting at 8 a.m., which meets at the Grange Hall. The craft/sales and quilt show at Lorane Grange opens at 10 a.m. as do the garage sales around Lorane. Lunch will be sold at the Grange. Delicious goodies will be on sale all day at the Rebekah Lodge, which will also host several family activities. Be sure to stop by the Lorane Fire Hall for information on emergency preparedness. The garage sales and sales at the grange will end at 4 p.m. There will be a barbecue from 3-5 p.m. in front of the Lorane Christian Church and an outdoor movie at 7 p.m./dusk on the south side



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