

Libraries

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and funding sources come from different directions," he said. Boice also noted that state statute mandated how certain funds could be spent. "When you're looking for an inner county solution, in other words taking money from one program or department to save money, rest assure that based on what we know about the budget and what's going to happen in the next few years, those are not viable solutions."

Currently, the county is looking into the possibility of enacting one of three plans. The first plan would have the county operate the library system under the current budget and see an immediate decline in library services as a result. The second option, dubbed the "90 day plan" would call for the libraries to continue offering the same level of service for 90 days before slowly reducing services. The third plan would call for additional funds to be transferred to the library from the general fund and a course of action somewhere between plan one and two.

Several residents braved the snow to speak in-person at the Douglas County Courthouse on the matter. Nancy Anderson said she worried the closure of the libraries would affect home values. Bud Cavachi of Canyonville asked the commission to defund the library system. "I went to two meetings and what wasn't addressed was staffing libraries with the cost of government employees. I don't know what the libraries will look like going forward but I do believe they need to change to survive," he said.

Other residents said their children and grandchild no longer utilized the library due to advances in technology.

Commissioners addressed the meeting individually with new commissioner Greg Leaf noting that he understood the issue was an emotional one but pointed out the \$100 million collected by the county was not the amount Douglas County netted. "It says we collect \$100 million but we only keep \$8.7 million," he said.

Commissioner Freeman also pointed to the decrease in revenue attributed to the loss of timber funds and the vast majority of services that may take a hit with few funds trickling in.

"I understand the passion and the concern and despite what folks say I absolutely understand the importance of it. But I also understand the importance of public safety," he said. Freeman went on to tell a story of an incident in Josephine County and the consequences of an under-funded police force. "I will never forget the terror in her voice. She called 911, a gentleman she had a restraining order against was pounding on her door and with equal terror in her voice, the 911 operator told her, 'I'm sorry. I have no one to send. Hide.' That's what it means when you don't have 24 hour service."

The next public hearing on the matter is scheduled for April.

Wyden looks to protect coast from drilling

Bill would permanently ban offshore drilling in three states

Washington, D.C. – Oregon's U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley joined their fellow West Coast senators in introducing the West Coast Ocean Protection Expansion Act this week to permanently ban offshore drilling on the outer continental shelf of Oregon, Washington and California.

The legislation, first introduced in 2010, would amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to permanently protect the coastal economies of the three states, which are worth about \$60 billion and support more than 650,000 jobs in Oregon, California and Washington.

"The decades-long ban on oil and gas exploration off the Pacific Coast has allowed the fishing, tourism and recreation economies in Oregon's coastal communities to thrive," Wyden said. **"By making these long-supported and essential protections permanent, this bill will continue to safeguard the thousands of jobs that depend on the opportunities along our shores."**

"Countless Oregonians depend on our coast to sustain jobs in our state's fishing, shipping, and tourism industries, and we

can't afford to put the state's economy at risk just to pad the profits of big oil," Merkley said. **"With a new Administration signaling a dangerous willingness to put polluters in charge, it is more important than ever to ensure that Oregon's coastline is protected."**

The West Coast Ocean Protection Expansion Act prohibits the U.S. Department of the Interior from issuing a lease for exploration, development or production of oil or natural gas in any area of the outer continental shelf off the coast of Oregon, Washington or California. In November, the Interior Department proposed protections from drilling for these waters through 2022. However, a permanent ban has not been signed into law.

The bill was also cosponsored by U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Kamala Harris, D-Calif. Congressman Jared Huffman, D-Calif., introduced a similar version of the bill in the House of Representatives, along with 14 cosponsors.

City to tackle fees after false start

BY CAITLYN MAY
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Vote on construction fees leaves board confused, set to change city ordinance after fee mix-up

The Cottage Grove City Council started the new year off with a bit of confusion.

After swearing in new mayor Jeff Gowing and councils Bob Ehler, Amy Slay and Kenneth Roberts, the board contended with the state of the city address which noted the city's achievements and challenges. However, the board was met with its first challenge within the first hour of the meeting when an agenda item called for a resolution amending the comprehensive fee schedule.

While the board and residents in attendance understood the agenda item to intend to discuss fees related to construction in the city, the issue quickly became muddled.

City Manager Richard Meyers addressed the issue at the close of the meeting with the city attorney noting that the board had voted down the fee schedule and not the fees associated with construction due to the nature of the wording of the agenda item. Monday's vote, according to the city attorney, was to decide whether or not to include the increase in fees in the city's fee schedule. The fees associated with construction within the city limits automatically in-

creases after a vote from a previous city council board; an issue that councilor Mike Fleck took notice of.

"I thought boards could not be bound by previous boards," he said. However, Meyers pointed out the fees were part of an overall plan that included contracts and previous boards could vote to bind subsequent boards to honor future contracts.

"I would move that we bring that forward at a future meeting. We didn't vote to raise that and that's abdicating my responsibility to the citizens and I absolutely will not stand for that, Fleck said.

New mayor Jeff Gowing echoed Fleck, saying, "I'm starting to feel like you're telling me I have to vote for it or we have to pass it and we should have the right to vote something down."

In order to address the fees directly, the board must amend the city's ordinance, a longer and more complicated procedure.

After further confusion on how to proceed the board voted to bring forth an agenda item that would allow it to alter the city's ordinance and vote directly on raising the fees.

Dog park in the works

BY SAM WRIGHT
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A wonderful opportunity has arrived in town for our furry four-legged friends, and they should expect to reap the benefits sometime soon.

A dog park has been approved by the city and is currently in the midst of construction off of Main Street. The idea came to fruition when Steve Nisewander read an article in the Sentinel that suggested the need for a dog park in town.

"I mow a big lot behind the car wash on Main Street and thought that would be a good place to build one," Nisewander said.

The park will have two double-gated entrances and a surrounding fence around the big plot of grass. So far, Nisewander has put in two fire hydrants (one with Duck colors and one with Beaver colors) and a picnic table. He plans to add another bench and has spoken with PetSafe on acquiring a trash can with a doggie bag dispenser.

Nisewander went before the city council to present his drawing of the park.

"The city was great; I showed them my drawing of what I wanted to build, and we laid out park rules," he said. The city also agreed to pay for a sign that presented the rules.

In other negotiations with PetSafe, Nisewander applied for a \$10,000 grant to help build the park. PetSafe approved a grant of \$5,000, which has gone a long way in building the park.

Weather has recently hindered construction. Nisewander had originally planned for the park to be done by Jan. 1, but weather delays have made things difficult. The valley experienced up to four inches of snow in some areas and a subsequent ice storm has Oregon state Police urging motorists to stay off the roads as they responded to over 700 accidents. Nisewander now says he is waiting for the snow to melt so they can dig into the ground to put the last two gates and also add another bench.

Expect the park to be open to the public soon, because once the snow melts, Nisewander should be back out in the field adding the finishing touches to the puppy play land.



The city of Cottage Grove announced the addition of a safe internet purchase exchange location outside of the Cottage Grove Police Station on Monday, Jan. 9. The space has been designated for residents to meet to pick-up items purchased from social media sites such as Facebook and Craigslist without worry for their personal safety.

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School board round-up

"Clean" financial report

The 2015-2016 annual audit report was presented by Phil Scrima. The school district usually goes through Pauly Rogers, an accounting firm based out of Portland, but due to difficulties in the past, the school district has decided to move to Accuity, LLC out of Albany.

Scrima reports that Pauly Rogers and an independent accountant determined a clean opinion with no deficiencies or best-practice suggestions.

The independent auditors initially stated that the school districts expenditures exceeded budget appropriations. However, Scrima, with some help, determined there were simple disagreements in operations.

"We closed two funds and put them into the general fund," Scrima said, "They thought that was some type of violation, but it isn't."

The school district was assigned a \$2.6 million liability for expenditures during the year.

Board members recognized

The school district marks January as the School Board Appreciation month. Each member of the school board was recognized by the school district and its enveloped schools for all the work and dedication they do for the students.

Cottage Grove High School Principal Iton Udosenata presented each board member with a CGHS lanyard.

Superintendent Krista Parent said that instead of personal gifts for the board, the school district donated small scholarships in each of their names to students in need of taking SAT prep courses and tests.

Gary Mort, Alan Baas, Jerry Settelmeier, Tammy Hodgkinson, Sherry Duerst-Higgins, Taylor Wilhour and Merlene Martin were all recognized for their work in the South Lane School Board.

Pump

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council the cheapest of the three was being brought before it.

The first option required construction to bring lines down 10th St while a second option saw lines headed from S. 8th St. near the entrance to the pool before routing to Taylor St. to the new site. The last, and sought after option, was to utilize 10th St. near the football field.

"We'd go under the retaining wall and go along the track and use the access road by the soft-ball field basically," Bradbsy said.

City code requires the lines be buried anyway, which had council scratching its head and Bradbsy noting that the procedure had been "frustrating." He did, however, inform council that the new route would not affect the new school being constructed in the area and the new facility had plans to utilize the route.

Council Boone made the motion to approve the change order noting, "Our choices are we authorize this or continue building a pump station that doesn't have efficient electricity."