

Drain Continued from A1



Mayor Rance Pilley and city administrator Carl Patenode say Drain is on a steady 50 year plan to succeed.

stop funding them in the wake of a financial shortfall. Efforts to sustain the library locally are underway but Pilley doesn't know what that would look like. A group of citizens has formed a friends of the library group to explore funding options, but so far they've come up empty handed. Other options floating around the county, such as turning the buildings into reading rooms, haven't garnered much support in Drain.

"The county pulled the rug out from the entire library system and we don't know what the future will bring for the libraries," he said. "But the suggestion of a reading room hasn't had a lot of support."

Currently, the city of Drain provides the maintenance for the building and the county has yet to pull its collection of books. However, groups are hesitant to take over day-to-day operation of the library without an agreement in place that would free them of any responsibility for the books.

"We don't know what's going to happen," Pilley said.

The closure of the library signaled a new era for the county, and for Drain it served as a reminder that vital services may be next on the chopping block.

Under Pilley's direction in January, the city council discussed how to urge the county to start a planning process to "ensure we'll have sheriff services," Pilley said.

"We want to make sure we don't go through the same thing as the library where it goes to the end and then they just shut it off."

Currently, 50 percent of Drain's general fund goes to the sheriff services contract with Douglas County.

STILL STANDING

When Dorothy Cooper was a girl, the bridal shop was a lumber store. Then a shoe repair shop, a building supply store, a donut shop and a western store. There's still timber up in the attic but down on the main floor, racks and racks of bridal wear attract customers from neighboring towns. Business, though, is still slow.

"It's been rough," she says, noting that the recession took out half of First St. "We got through trembling."

She mans the counter for her daughter, who owns the shop. It's easier, she says, to host the business in Drain where soccer games and parent-teacher conferences don't take her daughter away from the shop for the hour they would if Exclusively Bridal was located in Eugene, as originally intended.

A sign hangs behind the counter, citing Ephesians 5:22 and the bell on the door that signals a bride to be on the hunt for a dress hasn't rung this morning.

Despite this, Cooper says the shop can pay its bills and business as slowly returned even if the residents of First St. haven't.

"The store is in its 23rd year," she said. "We get people still coming in, looking for their

wedding dress."

Terrie Cosby still has folks stopping at her store too but with a recent accident closing a vital bridge, she's worried that just when her busy season should be starting, the Trading Post will face a lull.

"Winter is good for classes," she said. "But when it starts getting warm, I get a lot of tourists stopping in."

Cosby's shop is a collection of repurposed furniture, knick-knacks and most recently, an old fashioned soda shop with ice cream and rock candy.

She rents out space to vendors who sell everything from handmade finger puppets to western wear to soap and rocks.

"Believe it or not, I sell a fair amount of rocks," she said.

The building she occupies now is one of the few still welcoming customers on First St. But it's not where she started.

Cosby was originally running the Trading Post on the outskirts of town.

"They called it the Trading Post because that was the big sign. People also called it the Road Kill Grill," she said.

But that was two years ago. The building burned down and sent Cosby looking for a new

home.

Her new location was built in the 1900s and she took possession of it last year.

These days, rocks are selling but they're not the backbone of her business.

"We're in a period of repurpose," she said. That's why she sells transfers; designs that can be mounted to furniture, walls or windows. Some of the furniture in the store already has a transfer applied to its surface while other pieces lay bare, ready for customers to use any of the available transfers Cosby has for sale to transform.

Cooper and Cosby are making it work in Drain's downtown but a new arrival is set to draw more customers and while some are excited about its debut, others worry.

Dollar General will be taking the place of an old automotive repair shop that was recently demolished to make room for the chain store.

"I'm worried about Ray's," said Cooper. The city's only full-fledged grocery store has been hosting Fantastic Fridays and advertises rib roast for \$7.99 and pound. While Dollar General isn't likely to encroach on the store's meat sales, it may

take a bite out other product revenue.

"It will be good for that side of town," Pilley said.

WITHIN OUR MEANS

Patenode hopes to leave his desk by June. But he won't be going far.

"I'll be taking a position with the city as a project manager because I don't want to see the treatment center fail," he said.

That steady hand, however, is what Pilley says makes the difference between Drain and other agencies.

"We have a small staff but the state and federal staffs change so much that sometimes we have to make sure they're doing what they're supposed to so we can get the project done," he said.

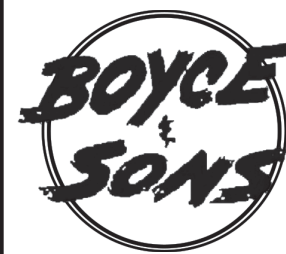
Residents will get the new water treatment plant and the city's new water and sewer lines will keep serious repairs at bay for years. But people will still have to travel into Cottage Grove and Eugene for some of the basics.

There's no drug store in Drain. The health clinic closed last year. There is a doctor in town but according to Patenode, she's only open "sometimes." For emergencies, Eugene is still the best bet despite the hour-long drive. The drive-thru coffee shop is still open but for a cup of Starbucks or Dutch Bros., it will mean a trip. So will buying a new car. The two car lots have packed it up and moved on.

"We're out of room now," Patenode said of the little city that isn't looking to grow. Dollar General will mark the first new construction in years and according to Pilley and Patenode, that's fine by them.

"All of our industrial properties are full," Patenode said. "We're a small city and I think people like it that way. We are happy."

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