

NEWS IN BRIEF

New app to pay for vehicle charges

MONMOUTH — The AeroVironment's charging station at Dairy Queen in Monmouth is part of the West Coast Electric Highway charging network.

A new app allows electric vehicle drivers to charge their vehicle and pay via smartphone on a pay-per-charge basis. Drivers still have the option to call AeroVironment's customer service center to pay for and activate the stations.

The app is available on iPhone and Android platforms. For more information: www.plugshare.com.

MINET seeks committee members

INDEPENDENCE — The Monmouth Independence Networks Board of Directors is looking for members for its finance committee. The committee reports to the MINET board.

Members should be financially savvy. The committee meets for about two to four hours each month.

For more information: Marilyn Morton, mmorton@minet-fiber.com or 503-837-0700.

Dallas city, URA adopted budgets

DALLAS — The Dallas City Council adopted the city's 2015-16 budget on June 15.

The city's budget committee met four times during April and May to review and approve the budget before sending it to the council for adoption.

The 2015-16 budget totals approximately \$39 million, about \$9.5 million of that is in general fund, which includes police, fire, finance, administration and community development departments.

The Dallas Urban Renewal Agency board also adopted its 2015-16 budget on June 15.

Dallas to see water, sewer increase

DALLAS — Dallas residents will see an increase in their water and sewer bills starting this month.

Part of a new rate structure in place for the last year, the rates have increased based on the Consumer Price Index for the Portland-Salem region. This year, that rate is 2.4 percent.

Residential water base rates will increase from \$16.50 to \$16.90 per month for the first three units of water — one unit of water is 750 gallons of water — and an additional charge of \$1.82 per unit when using more than three units. That is an increase from \$1.77.

Sewer base rates will increase from \$42.90 to \$43.93 per month. Also customers will notice a change on their sewer bill beginning July 1 that separates sewer and stormwater costs. In the past, charges for the two systems have been listed together on the sewer bill. The change will not result in a further increase in rates.

For more information: 503-831-3555.

CRB has Polk member opening

POLK COUNTY — The Citizen Review Board (CRB), an Oregon Judicial Department program that monitors case plans of children in foster care, has an opening for a Polk County resident.

Board members are volunteers who meet one day per month to review case plans of children in foster care and make recommendations to the court, involved agencies and legal parties.

For more information, go to the CRB website, www.ojd.state.or.us/crb or contact CRB coordinator Amy Church at 503-986-4535 or email CRB.Volunteer.Resources@ojd.state.or.us.

Independence awards good neighbors

INDEPENDENCE — Kevin Alejandre, the community liaison intern for the city of Independence, awarded 18 people with good neighbor awards at the June 9 city council meeting.

The volunteers helped Alejandre with various things, including organizing the Festival Informativo and community outreach.

The following citizens were honored: Janie Ramirez, Daisy Chavez, Karina Lopez, Irene Rodriguez, Andrea Tamayo, Paula Tamayo, Jose Angulo, Berenice Licon, Samantha Valdez, Ivan Acosta, Laura Miranda, Maria Babiker, Jovany Romero, Maria Vargas, Javier Garcia, Jaime Hernandez, Rene Chavez and Helen Talbert.

Also recognized as good neighbors by Independence Chief of Police Bob Mason were Independence Lt. Rick Igou for going above and beyond in helping a family in need, and Partnerships in Community Living Inc. (PCL), Ford Decker, Charlotte Vanderhave and Ginger Lusheinko assisting Igou in his project.

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Power rates set to decrease

By Emily Mentzer

The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Customers of Monmouth Power and Light will see a decrease in their bills effective July 1. A 3 percent decrease in rates was approved at the June 16 council meeting.

"We're a public entity," said City Manager Scott McClure at the meeting. "We don't need to make a profit. We're generating enough cash on an annual basis."

The power and light fund will still maintain a 36 percent contingency to use in case of emergencies, McClure said, meaning the fund will still be in good shape even with the decrease in rates.

The city of Monmouth endeavors to maintain at least 25 percent of the total amount budgeted in contingency for each fund, including general, water and sewer funds.

The rate adjustment passed unanimously.

"This is an excellent illustration between a public utility and a private utility," Councilor Marshall Guthrie noted.

The rate reduction will mean about \$190,000 less a year Monmouth Power and Light will collect: About \$56 a year for an average home, McClure said.

"It affects everybody who pays a utility bill," he said.

In other business, the council:

- Approved adding ducks to the backyard chicken ordinance.

- Approved a 2.1 percent cost-of-living increase for all non-represented city employees.

- Approved two new crosswalks on the campus of Western Oregon University, including one raised crosswalk.

That led to a discussion of other traffic concerns, including ways to control speeds on Madrona Street East. Councilor Steve Milligan and Mayor John Oberst argued for speed bumps or raised crosswalks, while McClure said emergency services were not fond of speed bumps.

"Monmouth has low-volume speed, we don't have accidents," McClure noted.

"You will open Pandora's Box. As soon as you do one, everyone will want one. We have a road fund with no money. Are we going to drop \$50,000 on speed bumps?"

Milligan noted with the improvements at Madrona Park, some citizens and residents of that neighborhood are concerned about increased pedestrian traffic.

"The last thing I want is an accident before we enact traffic provisions," Milligan said. "It's up to the will of the council, not the will of the staff."

Plans for riverfront begin to take shape

By Emily Mentzer

The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Work began on June 15 to ready the old Valley Concrete site to market to developers.

Independence City Manager David Clyne said at the June 9 city council meeting that the city will do some basic cleanup of the riverfront property, including grading the site, and has hired consultants to help recruit the right developer.

Chris Zahas of Leland Consulting Group said he is interested and intrigued to help the city find a buyer of the 20-acre parcel of land, which cost the city \$800,000.

"We're used to projects where we're having to deliver bad news," Zahas said. "This is one where there's very good news to tell. We're going to be reaching out to developers to find out what their potential interest is."

He and Mark Keller of Partnership Hospitality Services will do additional research to see what the feasibility is of a hotel on the waterfront.

"We're going to do some outreach to ... the wine industry," Zahas said. "See if there's connections, if they can support rooms at a hotel, events and a restaurant. We're meeting with the university. The list goes on and on of the people we will want to talk to."

Keller said the city of Independence already has a lot going for it to entice serious developers, from the trail network to the Willamette River to the existing amphitheater in Riverview Park.

"The amenities that are here, it's just tremendous, and it will draw people here," he said.

Zahas added that the economy is getting better,

making it easier to attract developers.

The city bought the site with economic development dollars in October 2014. The hope is to sell it to developers who will share the same vision for downtown Independence as the council, mayor and city staff have for it, Clyne said, with the first priority being lodging.

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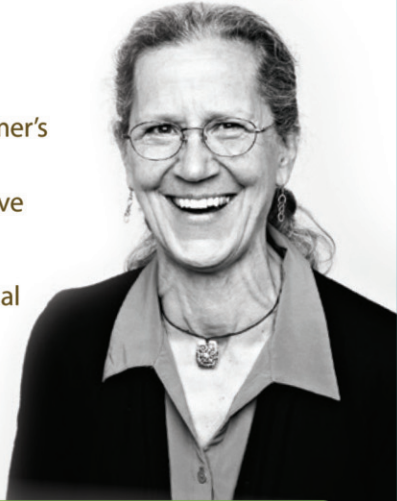
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