



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer file

Cycle Oregon helped show Monmouth is a bicycle friendly city, which is one of Monmouth Engaged's focus areas.

MONMOUTH ENGAGED

Four focus areas emerge as residents weigh in on future of city

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Imagine Monmouth being known far and wide as the most bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly town in Oregon.

"Bike trails, better sidewalks, safer crossings," said Libby Barg, with Barney and Worth, the consultants for Monmouth's visioning process. "The idea is that Monmouth is relatively flat; it's a college town, great for biking. What can we do to stand out as a bike friendly, pedestrian friendly city?"

That's one of the four main focus points of the Monmouth Engaged project, the city's visioning process that is wrapping up after an open house on Aug. 11.

During the process, 1,400 surveys were returned to Barney and Worth, Barg said, noting that for a city

the size of Monmouth, that was a large participation rate.

"We have over 700 emails from people who said they'd like to stay involved or learn more," she said. "Monmouth is an amazing community that so many people participated and so many people signed up to stay involved."

The open house on Aug. 11 was to give residents a chance to sign up and help make these "focus areas" a reality. Roughly 35 to 50 people attended.

"A bigger picture is that people love Monmouth," Barg said of the visioning process. "They're happy with how things are. If I were to summarize the results of the survey, it's, 'Let's do something more. Let's do something exciting. Let's make a bike friendly city.'"

Bicycle safety — and the safety of everyone on the

road — is one of the focus areas Pat Ohren plans to help with.

"There needs to be some safety issues addressed, both for motorized vehicles, and for pedestrians, skateboards and bicyclists as well. Nobody's watching out for each other," said Ohren, a member of the project's steering committee.

One way to increase safety and get closer to the goal of being a bike friendly city is to teach youth the rules of the road at a younger age, perhaps through a licensing program, Ohren said.

Now in his 70s, he recalled going to his local police department as a boy to take a bicycle safety course.

"We had to attend a two or four hour bicycle safety course," Ohren said. "That's not taught anymore, not even by parents."

He admits a licensing pro-

gram might be "a bit of a hard sell at first," but said it doesn't have to be too expensive.

Overall, Ohren said the visioning process went well — smoothly and quickly.

Other focus areas are more retail shops and restaurants, including a grocery store; increased partnership between the city and Western Oregon University; and more community gathering places.

Barg said a variety of citizens participated, from seniors to young families, seasoned volunteers to those who were trying it for the first time.

"What I like about Monmouth is how engaged people are with each other," she noted. "People didn't just come (to the open house), they stayed and talked to each other."

To see more: www.ci.monmouth.or.us.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Second closed for railroad repairs

INDEPENDENCE — Second Street, from C Street to D Street, will be closed from Aug. 26 to Sept. 2 in Independence. The closure is due to railroad track repairs.

This includes the Monmouth Street/Second Street intersection.

If you are headed to or from downtown Independence head east or west, you will be detoured. Monmouth Street eastbound will be detoured at Third Street. If you are traveling on North Main Street, you will be detoured at B Street. Those on Corvallis Road will be detoured at D Street.

Willamette & Pacific Railroad and the city of Independence are working together on the project, which consists of two blocks of track repairs and road repairs.

Salem man arrested on sex abuse

WEST SALEM — The Polk County Sheriff's Office arrested Hugh Reeves, 58, of West Salem in the 2500 block of Lincoln Road Northwest, West Salem, on Aug. 11 on two counts of first-degree sex abuse against a non-relative minor female.

Reeves was lodged at Polk County Jail on \$150,000 bail.

The arrest came after an investigation that began on July 31, where the minor reported allegations of abuse to an adult stemming from an incident on July 30 at Reeves' home. Deputies conducted a search warrant at Reeves' residence on Aug. 11. During the search warrant, items of interest were taken, including five desktop computers, one laptop, four external hard drives, four flash drives, two internal hard drives, two tablets, a camera and surveillance system with cameras inside and outside the house.

It is possible other victims are involved who have yet to come forward.

Anyone with more information may contact Polk County Sheriff detective John Williams at 503-623-9251.

Willamina couple survives crash

WILLAMINA — Paul Dolan, 80, and his wife, 81, both of Willamina, suffered minor injuries in a fiery crash on Highway 18 on Aug. 12.

Dolan was driving eastbound on Highway 18 when he approached a vehicle stopped, waiting to turn onto Pittman Road. Dolan swerved to the right and missed the stopped vehicle, but over-corrected, crossed the highway twice and went down a 25-foot embankment. Dolan's vehicle came to rest upside-down and caught on fire.

Witnesses stopped and pulled the couple from the vehicle before it was fully engulfed.

Salem woman charged for theft

DALLAS — A West Salem woman was arraigned on Thursday in Polk County Circuit Court after being indicted on 17 counts of first-degree criminal mistreatment, four counts of first-degree theft and 13 counts of misdemeanor theft.

Victoria Leigh Ruiz, 29, was formally charged by the Polk County District Attorney's Office for the acts, which are alleged to have occurred from January through May against multiple elderly and dependent victims.

Circuit Court Judge Sally Avera set bail for \$195,000.

Salem man faces manslaughter

DALLAS — A West Salem man was arraigned on Aug. 11 on charges of manslaughter, felon in possession of a firearm and unlawful possession of a firearm.

Nicholas Anthony Ransom, 34, was formally charged by Polk County District Attorney's Office in the fatal shooting of Matthew Pierce, which occurred in West Salem on July 15.

Ransom's bail was set by Circuit Court Judge Monte Campbell at \$115,000.



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