



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Workers clear brush and scotch broom from the site of the future Bridgeport Community Center on Thursday.

Dream takes shape as land is cleared

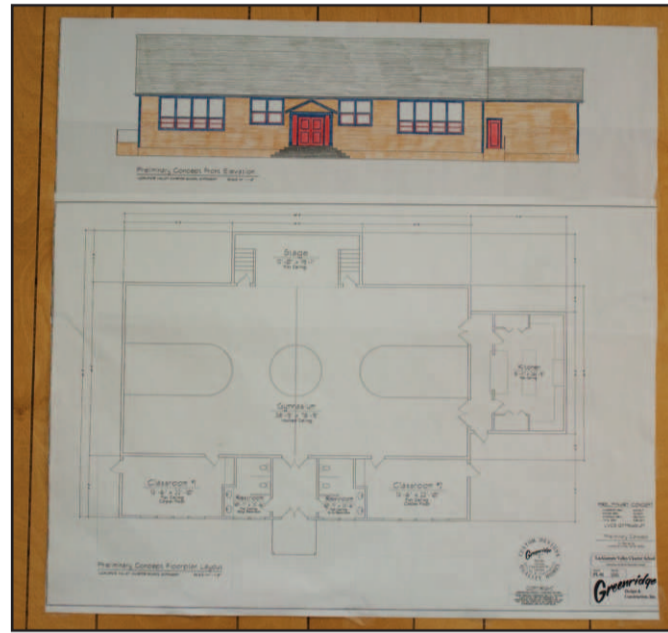
By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

BRIDGEPORT — Just a concept until last week, the building Luckiamute Valley Charter School board members and administrators have dreamed of for years has begun to take shape.

Well, at least the foundation that it will sit on has. Last week, the rumbling of a backhoe filled the air at the school Bridgeport campus as brush and scotch broom were removed from the future gym and cafeteria/community center site.

A conceptual drawing of the building, the scale of which yet to be determined, is hanging on Executive Director Dan Austin's office wall. He said it been the board's goal to build the facility for at least 10 years, as long as he's been with the school.

With work finally begun on what the school has named the Bridgeport Community Center, he has more than just a drawing to look at.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

A conceptual drawing hangs in Dan Austin's office.

"That's the dream," he said, pointing to the cleared field next to his office. "Now, it's just right there."

Austin said the building could house a gym, cafeteria, classrooms and a computer lab.

He said the board would like to see it used as a com-

munity center, providing space for events or as a satellite clinic for medical, dental, and eye care professionals.

The school has been asking for input from the Bridgeport community on how it could use the facility. "The central focus for the

board is how we can make the school more central to the community," he said.

Austin said while ground clearing has begun, actual construction will be further in the future because the school has to secure funding.

He said the school will spend the next year to 18 months applying for grants to pay for the center.

Austin said the amount of money secured through grants and in-kind donations will determine the scope of the building, but he gave a possible range of \$600,000 to \$1 million.

He said in the meantime, the school will look for an architect, builder and project manager so once funding is in hand, work can begin.

Austin said the school has made a number of improvements at the Bridgeport campus since he joined the school, but this will be the most anticipated.

"This is a big project, the biggest we have ever attempted," he said.

Dallas updates policy on guns

School board clears the air on whether or not staff can carry

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The Dallas School District is set to make a minor change to its policy regarding allowing staff to bring concealed weapons to work, but plenty of research, discussion and thought got it there.

"I will tell you, never has so much time been spent on so few words," said Dennis Engle, the district's assistant superintendent. State law allows school boards to decide if employees and volunteers are allowed to bring guns to work with a concealed carry permit. In Oregon, citizens are allowed to carry concealed on school property.

The board wished to make the longstanding practice of allowing employees to carry concealed at work clear in its policy.

The resulting change just required a wording revision on one part of its "Public Conduct on School Property" to include a reference to the state statute allowing people carry guns at school with a concealed weapons permit.

It omitted a confusing reference to a student policy regarding weapons.

The policy now reads: "No person on district property will bring, possess, conceal or use a weapon as prohibited by federal and state law, except as allowed by ORS (Oregon Revised Statute) 166."

Federal law prohibits people from carrying guns at school, but defers to state law in Oregon, specifically ORS 166.370, which says those with concealed weapons permits are allowed to carry guns in public buildings, including schools.

Board member Mike Blanchard said those with concealed carry permits should be familiar with state law.

However, those unfamiliar with Oregon gun laws may need to do some reading to be clear on what is allowed, he noted.

"But it's not hard to find," Engle said.

The board reviewed the revised policy at its Nov. 9 meeting and it will be brought before the board again before final approval.

This is a drill; it is only a drill

Itemizer-Observer staff report

INDEPENDENCE — Central High School will be the location of an active shooter drill on Tuesday.

The purpose of this drill is to train emergency agencies and school district personnel in how to respond if an active shooter incident were to take place on campus.

A tabletop exercise on

Nov. 10 brought together representatives from area law enforcement, as well as from the school district and Polk County CERT to prepare for the event.

Police, fire and EMS will respond in real time as dispatched during the event. Student and adult actors will play victims, and Itemizer-Observer reporters will update social media.



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