

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer
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WHAT WILL SPROUT UP AT INDEPENDENCE RIVERFRONT?

The 20-acre lot on the Willamette River, owned by the city of Independence, is ready for development by Tokola Properties.

Old Valley Concrete site will become a Tokola Properties development

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Tokola Properties, of Gresham, have been selected to develop the land formerly occupied by Valley Concrete, said Shawn Irvine, economic development director for Independence.

"They've worked on several successful public-private partnerships in the last several years," he said. "Tokola is primarily a developer of higher-density, residential and mixed-use units, but sees the opportunity for lodging on this site, and will be partnering with a hotel developer for the project."

Now that the developer has been chosen, work can



The city of Independence invested roughly \$400,000 into the \$800,000 property to grade it, survey it, and do other things required for development.

begin on the details of how the land will be developed and for how much.

"It is very premature at

this point, with so many decisions to be made by both teams, to forecast an accurate construction start date,"

Irvine said. "Doing it right is far more important than doing it quickly."

The company was selected from three who submitted requests for qualifications, a method the city used to attract a developer who would align with the city's vision for the 20-acre plot of land.

The city bought the land from Valley Concrete for \$800,000 in October 2014, and invested roughly \$400,000 in grading, surveys and otherwise preparing the land to be "shovel-ready."

The reason for that was to make sure it was developed to its maximum potential, Irvine said.

"We will be working together with Tokola in the

first phase of this project to fine tune the plan for this project by the creation of a master plan and the appropriate land use and zoning," Irvine said. "Identification of an acceptable hotel partner will also be essential to early success as well."

Getting those things defined, as well as financing, will be broadly identified in an exclusive negotiating agreement over the next couple of months, Irvine said.

"From there, we'll negotiate a development and disposition agreement, which will have all the nuts and bolts about how the property will be developed, when, who pays for what, etc.," he said.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Year-end donations at Goodwill expected to be strong.

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FALLS CITY

City considers how to help legislation that would pay for a full-time law officer.

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MONMOUTH

Nicholas Indra is turning his 3-D printer into a full-time business.

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SPORTS

Sports editor Lukas Eggen spells out his athletic goals for 2016, which include tennis, golf, basketball and a triathlon.

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EDUCATION

Attendance reports are in for school districts around the county, but what do they really say about how well Polk County students attend?

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FAREWELL, 2015; HELLO 2016

The Itemizer-Observer takes a look at the top stories of each month, and a few notables. Happy New Year!

Itemizer-Observer staff report
POLK COUNTY — It has been a busy year with some things getting completed and others just getting started.

Take a look back through the Itemizer-Observer's top stories of 2015.

January

Jan. 7: "Delirious Ducks; Football's championship game run gives locals 'Ducks Fever'" — Longtime Oregon Duck fan and Polk County Commissioner was thrilled to travel to Arlington, Texas, to watch the football team compete in the inaugural College Football Playoff National Championship Game. The Ducks lost the game to Ohio State.

January notables:

Jan. 14: "Rookie representative" — Polk County elected two new representatives to the state Legislature: Paul Evans and Mike Nearman.

Jan. 28: "Death raises questions" — a young man dies when medics cannot safely reach him because of an undermanned sheriff's

department.

February

Feb. 4: "10 important questions regarding the county public safety levy" — When Polk County Commissioners agreed to put a public safety levy on the ballot in May, reporter Jolene Guzman went to work answering questions about what it would mean, how much it would cost, and why the sheriff's department and district attorney's office needed the help. It was up to the public to decide, but this story kicked off a series of stories Guzman wrote, diving into the topics. The levy passed in May.

February notables:

Feb. 18: "No place to call home; Issues of homelessness a hidden problem in Polk County" — Homelessness can affect anyone, and not much help is available in Polk County.

March

March 4: "Who will be Dallas' new schools leader?" — Three finalists for



In January, Rep. Paul Evans was one of two rookie representatives from Polk County to be elected to the Oregon Legislature's House of Representatives.

Dallas School District's new superintendent are introduced to the community. All three prove to have the ex-

perience, but Michelle Johnstone shines through and is offered the job a week later.

March notables:

March 18: "Center will increase health access; Full dental, medical, infant-toddler care to be available" —

Construction begins on the Central Health and Wellness Center.

See REVIEW, Page 5A

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

<p>wed</p> <p>Feeling tense? Head over to Rogue Farms for some free yoga in the hopyards, the last Wednesday of each month. 6 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 40 Lo: 26</p>	<p>thu</p> <p>As you make plans to ring in the New Year, remember to include a designated driver: Be one or find one, and have a safe one.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 39 Lo: 25</p>	<p>fri</p> <p>Happy New Year! To celebrate the arrival of 2016, our office is closed today. May your year be a blessed and happy one.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 39 Lo: 26</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>Monmouth Senior Center will host its monthly all-you-can-eat breakfast fundraiser this morning. 8:30-10:30 a.m. \$3-6.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 40 Lo: 26</p>	<p>sun</p> <p>Is learning to sing on your list of resolutions? From the Heart Community Sing is open to all ages. 1:30-3 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 39 Lo: 26</p>	<p>mon</p> <p>Dust off that instrument and join others in the New Horizons Orchestra for those adults looking for music. 6:30 p.m. \$25/month.</p> <p>Mostly cloudy Hi: 38 Lo: 29</p>	<p>tue</p> <p>Got a new e-reader? The Independence Public Library will host a workshop to help you get to know your device. 6-8 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Partly cloudy Hi: 41 Lo: 29</p>
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