

On your ballot

Local measures and races

MEASURES

- Measure 27-118: Falls City School District, \$2 million bond to build a multipurpose gym and cafeteria at Falls City Elementary School.
- Measure 27-119: City of Dallas, 10-year, \$10 million bond to repair residential streets.

CANDIDATES

- Polk County Commissioner Position No. 1 (nonpartisan position) —

Jennifer Wheeler (incumbent) and Terrence "Terry" Taylor.

- Polk County Assessor — Doug Schmidt.
- Polk County District Attorney — Aaron Felton.
- Judge of Circuit Court, 12th District, Position No. 2 — Monte Campbell.
- Oregon House of Representatives, District 10 — David Gomberg (incumbent, Democrat); and Thomas M. Donohue (Republican).
- Oregon House of Representatives, District 20 — Paul Evans (incumbent, Democrat); and Laura S.

Morett (Republican).

- Oregon House of Representative, District 23 — Mike Nearman (incumbent, Republican); Beth Jones (Republican); and Jim Thompson (Independent).
- Oregon Senate, District 5 — Arnie Roblan (incumbent, Democrat); and Dick Anderson (Republican).
- Oregon Senate, District 12 — Brian Boquist (incumbent, Republican); and Ross Swartzendruber (Democrat).

Of note: The offices of Polk County sheriff, treasurer and clerk will appear on the November ballot.

Falls City voters asked to support schools

Crowded gyms, kitchens, classrooms cramp teachers and students

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — On April 20, Falls City School District staff prepared more than 130 meals in a kitchen with very limited prep space — and no dishwasher.

That means everything is hand washed. Each meal tray has to be dried with a paper towel.

"We do that every day, once a day," said Head Cook Yvonne VanHorn.

VanHorn recalled years ago she was asked a question: "If you could have anything, what would it be? I said a dishwasher."

Measure 27-118, a \$2 million bond to build a multipurpose gym and cafeteria at Falls City Elementary School, would grant that wish.

The 20-year bond would cost \$1.30 per \$1,000 of assessed value and, if passed, would be doubled by a state grant, making \$4 million available for the project.

Proponents say the gym would allow the district to hold more sports practices at once — and avoid having practices run until after 9 p.m. for some teams.

More space for a cafeteria would give kitchen staff more elbow room, food storage space, and the modern convenience of a dishwasher.

Classroom space could be



expanded at the elementary school as "gym" classes could be moved from a basement "multipurpose room," that also serves as a music room.

Currently the school has classes with two grade levels taught by one teacher.

School officials say with more space, they could break up the larger classes into single grades.

Falls City School Board Chairwoman Jami Kidd said the proposed facility could offer the district the opportunity and room to hire full-time music and drama, and health and physical education teachers.

"We have really seen a difference in our kids' ability to be well-rounded, lifelong learners decline without the influence of extracurricular activities, music and PE," she said. "In order to empower our kids to be successful, we are bringing health and physical education back into the regular curriculum."

As planned now, the building would be next to

the elementary school on land the school district owns, but is not using.

Like the school site, it has a steep slope on what would be in the back side of the building.

Resident and City Councilor Tony Meier raised questions about cost to build an earthquake-safe facility compared to the flat land across the street, now occupied by a covered play structure and playground.

Project architect Alan Costic said the site shouldn't affect the cost and the facility would have to be built to current earthquake codes.

"The cost would be relatively the same whether we built up here or over there. The reason we are building here is really proximity to this building," he said. "The fact that these children are going to be the ones who will be using it."

Costic said while plans are still preliminary, the objective is to build a facility that is as maintenance-free as possible.

"We know that you are going to be paying money now," Costic said. "There's no sense in paying money year after year after year in terms of upkeep, so that is one of the goals we have in terms of developing this."

Resident Charlie Flynn said the district is asking for the bond at a time when the

city is facing potentially costly upgrades to its sewer system.

He said at a recent town hall meeting that he's concerned about how the new facility would affect the system.

"We are facing a real issue with the septic systems and having to do a lot with that in a short amount of time or the state may step in," Flynn said. "And once they do, we have no choices left."

Falls City Superintendent Jack Thompson said he believes because the building will use water more efficiently than the existing gym, there will be no negative impact to the city's treatment plant.

"I actually think it is going to reduce the amount of flow into the system, especially when we have large events," Thompson said.

School board member Larry Sickles agreed with Flynn that timing is key, but for another reason.

He said the state's grant makes the bond a unique opportunity.

"We are one of nine schools that got selected to do this, because they recognize the need that we have," Sickles said. "Doing this facility now is extremely important because of the matching funds. If we don't get the matching funds, we couldn't do this."

Streets: City says repairs will get more pricey; opponents say no guarantees

Continued from 1A

That the proposed bond doesn't address the whole issue is another part of the proposal opponents take issue with.

"If you vote for the bond, there's no guarantee that your street will be repaired," said Dallas attorney Stephen Mannenbach, who has been critical of the proposal.

He said the city should have published a map of streets that could be repaired with the bond. That way people would know what they are voting for.

Mannenbach said his main criticism is whether the city considered if prop-

erty owners, especially those on fixed incomes, can afford the additional taxes.

"They are not going to do it based on your ability to pay, we are just going to tax property owners," Mannenbach said. "To me, it just shows a lack of compassion for people on a fixed income"

Others voting against the bond say the city needs to make a better case that asking for additional taxes is the only option.

"I think first they need to show that they are very frugal with the money," said Dallas resident Terri Parsons. "We need new ideas."

After looking at the city's budget, Parsons questions why only \$270,000 out of a \$1.1 million is going to street repair.

She added that she would like the city to consider prioritizing general fund money for streets or consider cuts in other places to pay for streets.

"It seems like a very small percentage is going to street repairs," she said.

Rich Rohde, who is working with the political action committee supporting the measure, said the plan is forward-thinking and saves the city from having to pay even more later.

"We are coming up with a solution that will help us now, and hopefully, future generations," he said.

Christiansen added letting the backlog of maintenance get longer will only hurt the city and those who live on streets needing repair.

"The roads will continue to be in poor condition and, not only do they continue to be in poor condition, but they keep on getting worse," he said.

Christiansen adding that cracks and potholes will form and continue to deteriorate until the street basically becomes gravel.

Motor voters add 4.4 percent to pool

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Ballots will be mailed on Friday. For 519 people in Polk County, it will be their first election as registered voters — and all they had to do was have a current driver's license.

The Motor Voter bill took effect on Jan. 1 and has increased the number of registered voters statewide by 34,410 in nearly four months.

In Polk, it's a 4.4 percent increase in registered voters, said County Clerk Val Unger.

"During an average week, outside of an election cycle, we typically receive 50 to 70 registrations, which may be new registrations to our county or address updates," Unger said. "In the past three days, I have processed over 600 online registrations."

In addition to the motor voters, more information about the primary election has been distributed,

prompting political party changes.

In Polk County, numbers have gone up for both Democrats (1,385) and Republicans (747).

Motor voters must return a card to be affiliated with a party, or they are registered as a non-affiliated voter and would not be eligible to vote in the presidential primary.

Unger said another factor in the changes in parties could be because the Independent party opened the primary to non-affiliated voters.

"As was done in the past, when a major party opens up the primary, the secretary of state mails a notice to each non-affiliated voter informing them of their right to request an Independent ballot if they choose," Unger said. "This time, the state also included additional information about the closed primary system, informing each voter of their options for this election, including updating to a major party."

Drop box locations:

Ballots are due by 8 p.m. on May 17. They may be mailed, or put in a drop box around the county:

- Polk County Courthouse, east side: 24-hours.
- Falls City Wagner Community Library, 111 N. Main St.: Tuesday-Thursday, 1 to 6:30 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Election Day, 1 to 8 p.m.
- Grand Ronde, Governance Center Building G, 9615 Grand Ronde Road: Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Election Day, 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Independence City Hall, 555 S. Main St.: 24-hour drop site in the front lobby.
- Monmouth Public Library, 168 Ecols St. S.: Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Election Day, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Western Oregon University, Werner University Center, 345 N. Monmouth Ave.: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Election Day, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- West Salem Roth's Market, 1130 Wallace Road NW: Sunday-Saturday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Election Day, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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Sudoku solution

2	6	3	9	4	7	5	1	8
4	9	8	2	1	5	6	7	3
1	5	7	6	3	8	4	2	9
3	1	5	4	6	9	2	8	7
6	7	9	5	8	2	3	4	1
8	2	4	3	7	1	9	6	5
7	3	6	1	9	4	8	5	2
5	4	1	8	2	3	7	9	6
9	8	2	7	5	6	1	3	4

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- Holding offenders accountable
- Supporting law enforcement