

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer

Volume 141, Issue 33 www.Polkio.com August 17, 2016 \$1.00

City set to fund \$3.5 M project

By Emily Mentzer
 The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The city of Independence is asking for bids to build Osprey Lane, a new street that will connect D and C streets through the Independence Landing area, formerly known as Valley Concrete. The project is listed as an urban renewal district project, with a total budget of \$3.5 million. “What we are looking at is a two-phase project,” City Manager David Clyne said. “So we’re asking to bid the whole package, but phase one now and lock in pricing for phase two.”

The project includes sewer and water lines, as well as sidewalks and gutters through the Valley Concrete site, a roundabout on C Street, and streetscape and sidewalk improvements from Riverview Park past Mecanico to the bridge. On the other side of downtown, sidewalks and streetscape will be installed stretching to the Independence Civic Center.

The project will be paid for through a loan from Oregon’s Special Public Works Fund, Clyne said, and repaid from URD funds.

Right now, the URD carries the loan for the Independence Civic Center to the tune of \$889,856 this year. Of that, \$460,000 is transferred from the general fund as a loan. The URD’s revenue expected from 2016-17 property taxes is \$459,935.

Clyne said he expects future taxes in the URD to pay for the \$3.5 million project, and adding the streets and other infrastructure will induce development.

“That’s the whole point of urban renewal, to induce desired development,” he said. “People always argue, ‘why not just let it happen?’ But that’s the point. It hasn’t happened.”

Clyne said he didn’t think people would be happy to see the site replaced with another industrial development.

He said a hotel — which is part of the city’s plan for Independence Landing — has been a priority for the city for decades.

“That’s going to be a game-changer to get that done, so that’s the goal,” Clyne said.

No final agreements have been signed with developers of the site, but talks are still open with Tokolo Properties. Clyne said with any developer, system-development charges may be credited or waived while the city “pushes this project.”



Multiple classes of 4-H and FFA participants were judged on Thursday afternoon during the Polk County Fair. JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

HERDING BIRDS

Youths talk turkey in Small Barn at Polk County Fair

By Jolene Guzman
 The Itemizer-Observer

RICKREALL — You’ve heard of herding cats. But what about turkeys?

You could say that was what was happening in the Small Animal Barn between noon and 1 p.m. at the Polk County Fair on Thursday. The market turkey show had more than its fair share

of the odd-looking birds, having to show them in multiple classes.

“There were some really nice birds,” said poultry judge Bev Davis.

The brief time between classes created turkey traffic jams in the barn already crowded with an unusually large number of turkeys, chickens and rabbits. The turkeys at the fair are

surprisingly well-trained — no harness or leash required to move them — just a stick to guide them in the right direction.

Taylor McArthur, an incoming sophomore with Central High School’s FFA Club, has a secret to that. It involves bribing them with treats.

“First, you’ve got to get them used to you,” he said. “Then you take grass and

they follow that.”

Or he could have used watermelon or blueberries, two things he was surprised to learn his brood liked.

This is Taylor’s first year raising the birds that could confidently be placed in the “so weird-looking they are cute” category.

“It was fun,” he said after the show. **See FAIR, Page 5A**

Teachers put lessons to the test

By Jolene Guzman
 The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Elementary teachers in Dallas schools say they may be facing an unusual situation teaching science during the upcoming school year — in a good way.

Last week, a group of Dallas teachers attended training on Project Lead the Way (PLTW), the nonprofit providing science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curriculum the district will begin using at the elementary level in 2016-17.

Thursday, the teachers worked in groups on one of the projects designed for third graders. It had them designing a machine to rescue a tiger who had fallen into a mote.

Ideas for how to do that differed between groups — a core principle behind PLTW: There’s not just one answer to a problem.

“The idea is to have a pulley to lift him up and have the device on wheels so it can move,” said Elizabeth Blake, a second-grade teacher at Lyle Elementary School, describing her group’s solution to the tiger’s predicament.

The group was having fun, so they were betting their students would, too.

“That’s going to be the problem — getting them to stop in the time (scheduled) for this,” Blake said.

PLTW designs projects and class lessons aiming to inspire curiosity in science and math early, said Susan Castillo, the organization’s west region vice president.

“It’s very hands-on, project-based, problem-based learning, so students are applying math and science in very dynamic ways,” Castillo said “It’s very engaging because they are solving



Teachers worked in groups on a Project Lead the Way lab on Thursday. JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

real-world problems through these various activities they get involved in.”

She said students make up their minds early about their interest and ability in science and math, some as young second or third grade. The objective of the elementary curriculum, called “Launch” is to show them as they begin school that science and engineering doesn’t have to be complicated and boring.

“We know if we can get them early applying math and science in really fun, engaging ways — where they can really see in real life how you apply it and why it matters — then we can get them excited about it early on,” Castillo said.

Steve Martinelli, Dallas’ director of instructional services, said PLTW fits with how the district has been incorporating STEM teaching in elementary schools, especially at Whitworth Elementary, a

fourth- and fifth-grade school.

“I think it will be the majority of our science content that we do,” Martinelli said. “What I saw at Whitworth was they were doing great things with engineering and design, but teachers were developing all their own units. It was so overwhelming. It’s a ton of time and work to get those done.”

PLTW provides those lessons and allows teachers to focus on teaching strategies.

Watching teachers learn the new material, Martinelli said he’s excited to see how young students react to science classes where they learn concepts — and use them.

“It makes me want to be a kid again — or a teacher,” he said, smiling. “Science is all about how the world works. It’s not all the technical jargon.”

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS
 Suspicious package at courthouse cleared. **»Page 3A**

FALLS CITY
 Parking at Harding park to be restricted. **»Page 3A**

INDEPENDENCE
 No injuries in house fire on E Street. **»Page 3A**

MONMOUTH
 Western Oregon’s soccer team prepares for season. **»Page 11A**

SPORTS
 Raft race provides fun in the sun. **»Page 10A**

Monmouth Cutoff is closed

Itemizer-Observer staff report
 DALLAS — Monmouth Cutoff Highway from Uglow Street east to the west side of Holman Road will remain closed until Friday.

The purpose of the closure is to repair a bridge. Polk County crews will be doing the work with the assistance of city of Dallas crews and contractors.

After Friday, there will be flagged access during the final work and repaving.

Detour signs will be set up to warn drivers of the closure and alternate routes. The primary detour route will be Godsey Road to Miller Avenue.

Fire season is still in effect

Itemizer-Observer staff report
 POLK COUNTY — The 2016 fire season has burned far fewer acres than at the same point in previous years — but officials warn caution must remain.

To date, 470 wildfires have burned 3,685 acres on Oregon Department of Forestry protected land. In 2015, 17,800 acres were burned at the same point.

ODF credits preparedness and weather conditions as factors to the decrease in acreage burned.

ODF stresses for people to remain vigilant in preventing fires. To date, 87 percent of all fires started on ODF-protected lands have been caused by people. Campfires and debris have been restricted statewide for several weeks.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed
 World’s Finest performs “American Dubgrass” style tonight at Monmouth Music in the Park. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Sunny
 Hi: 85
 Lo: 56

thu
 Calling all veterans: The Independence Elks Lodge hosts a free dinner and presentation on the third Thursday. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Sunny
 Hi: 97
 Lo: 62

fri
 Dig out your bluegrass instruments and jam with like-minded musicians at the Faith Evangelical Free Church. 7-10 p.m. Free.

Sunny
 Hi: 102
 Lo: 61

sat
 Come learn about SMART and pick up a free book at the Original Independence Farmers Market. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free.

Sunny
 Hi: 98
 Lo: 56

sun
 Join the Dallas Wingdingers RC Flying Club at Whitworth Elementary School gym for a demonstration. 1-3 p.m. Free.

Sunny
 Hi: 92
 Lo: 54

mon
 Willamette Valley New Horizons Orchestra gives adults a second chance to learn an instrument. 6:30 p.m. \$25/per monthly fee.

Sunny
 Hi: 84
 Lo: 54

tue
 James2 Community Kitchen serves all who are hungry a free meal at St. Philip Catholic Church. 4:30 p.m. Free.

Sunny
 Hi: 86
 Lo: 54