

EDITORIALS

Independence is playing the odds

It's a gamble. The city of Independence is prepared to spend another \$3.5 million on Independence Landing — the former Valley Concrete site — to build roads, water and sewer systems, as well as streetscape — which is what makes the sidewalks downtown look attractive.

The city has already spent roughly \$1.2 million on the property — \$800,000 purchasing the riverfront acreage in November 2014, and about half a million getting it what cities call "shovel-ready," leveling the land, demolishing existing structures, anything that needs to get done so the developer doesn't have to.

All said and done, should the total \$3.5 million be spent on the infrastructure project, the city will be into this property for roughly \$4.7 million.

City leaders say it will be money well spent when a hotel is completed as well as retail and housing units on the riverfront. True, the desired project will enhance the downtown area and add a lot of foot traffic, benefiting all who do business and live in downtown Independence.

The city says it is still in talks with Tokola Properties for developing some of Independence Landing, and that building the roads and infrastructure will help in those negotiations.

Leaders expect to recoup the invested millions through tax revenues generated once the building is completed.

But with no agreements officially signed, it's an educated guess at best — at worst, it's a catastrophe waiting to happen.

The city has done due diligence in exploring hotel development, but so far no one has put their money where their mouths are, except for the city itself.

That's a lot of taxpayer dollars to be spending on a gamble. We hope it pays off for Independence.

PUBLIC AGENDA

Public Agenda is a listing of upcoming meetings for governmental and nongovernmental agencies in Polk County. To submit a meeting, send it at least two weeks before the actual meeting date to the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* via email (ionews@polkio.com).

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 17

- **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

THURSDAY, AUG. 18

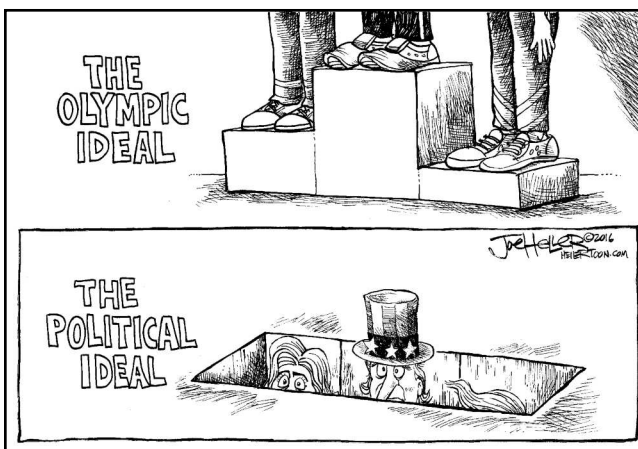
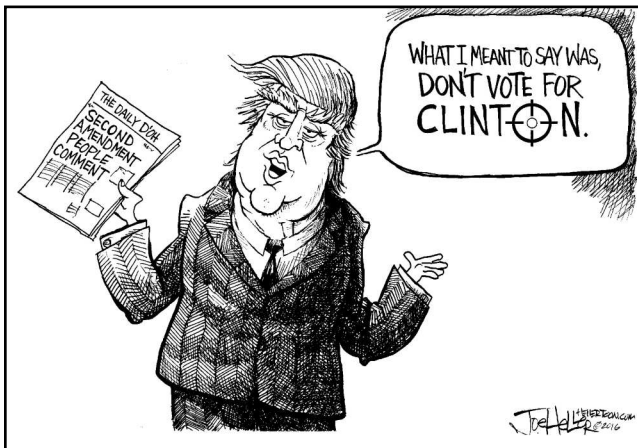
- **Independence Parks and Recreation Board** — 6 p.m., Independence Civic Center, third floor, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Polk County Fair Board** — 8 a.m., Polk County Fairgrounds and Event Center, Main Building, Meeting Room No. 2, 520 S. Pacific Highway (99W), Rickreall. 503-623-3048.

MONDAY, AUG. 22

- **Independence Library Board** — 4 p.m., Independence Public Library, 175 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Dallas School Board** — 6:30 p.m., Dallas School District office, 111 SW Ash St., Dallas. 503-623-5594.

TUESDAY, AUG. 23

- **Independence City Council** — 7:30 a.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Monmouth Senior Advisory Board** — 1 p.m., Monmouth Senior Center, 180 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network** — 3 p.m., MVBCN office, 2965 Ryan Drive SE, Salem. 503-585-4935.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

City should find innovative funding

The Dallas Aquatic Center is used by all ages and benefits the entire community. The city should consider innovative ways to improve funding including:

Buy-in charges paid by new property owners — similar to water and sewer facilities where new residents buy into the improvements that were initially built and paid for by existing property owners.

Special assessment district for new property owners — an assessment district to capture newly developed properties which would be assessed a portion of the pro-rata cost of operations of the aquatic center.

Redevelopment agency revenues — tax increment or other revenues whereby the amount of property tax revenue available from properties within a certain area are frozen as of the creation of the district. Revenues from within the district that are attributable to an increase in assessed value are allocated to the aquatic center and could be

used to retire bonds.

Joint financing — the school district could partner with the city to pay a proportional amount of the operations costs based on their usage of the facility. This could include reimbursement for the initial cost of construction.

Community foundation — a 501(c)(3) foundation that can collect tax-deductible donations used for operation of the aquatic center.

Volunteers could spearhead programs to obtain additional revenues.

George Irving
Dallas

Lions work to help all see, hear well

To all the citizens and business owners of our community: As we start another year in the Lions working toward our centennial in 2017, we would like to say thank you for your support and let you know a little of what we accomplished this past year.

Central School District students in kindergarten

through sixth grade — and the Mid-Valley Christian Academy — had their eyes tested. Those needing glasses were assisted by the KEX Kids Fund, Central Lions Club and the Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation.

In addition, we had the mobile health screening unit in the community several times and screened more than 40 adults, and were able to assist several in need of glasses and even some hearing aids.

For the first time, we gave two \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors at Central High School in memory of Lion Carol Cable. And on New Year's Day, we provided free breakfast at the Monmouth Senior Center.

These and many other things were accomplished with your support. Again, thank you.

If you or someone you know would like more information, or to join Lions, call 503-838-2240.

Steve Moser
Central Lions Club
membership chair
Independence



WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words. Longer letters will be edited.

Each writer is restricted to one letter per 30-day period.

Letters that are libelous, obscene or in bad taste will not be printed. Attacks by name on businesses or individuals will not be printed.

Letters that are promotions for a business, products or services will not be printed.

The *Itemizer-ObsERVER* does not guarantee the accuracy of facts presented by letter writers; dissenters are welcome to respond. Letter writers who dis-

agree with other published letter writers should maintain a civil discourse and address the subject, not the author.

Letters, like all editorial material submitted to the newspaper, are edited for length, grammar and content.

Letters must include the author's name, address and telephone number. This includes letters submitted via the *I-O's* website. Names and cities of residence are published; street addresses and telephone numbers are used for verification purposes only.

Letters must be submitted

from individuals, not organizations, and must be original submissions to the *I-O*.

Letters of thanks to businesses, individuals and organizations are limited to 10 names.

The deadline for letters to the editor is 10 a.m. Monday. Letters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline.

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