

Polk County
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Voters will decide on 15-year bond in May

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — This May, voters in Southwest Polk Rural Fire Protection District will weigh whether to approve a

15-year, approximately \$5 million bond for stations, fire engines and equipment. Southwest Polk's board approved putting the question before voters on Monday night.

"I figured it out, it's going to raise my taxes about \$1,000 per year on my property. I'm willing to pay that for fire protection," said Frank Pender, a board member.

He lives about five miles outside of Dallas on 80 acres of forested land. "We've had the services of Southwest Polk several times in my 37, 38 years of living up there," Pender said.

"It's getting to the point where we don't have services, as far as the equipment, to do the job. "I know it's hard on all of us," he added.
See BOND, Page 3A

Seed to Supper

Marion-Polk Food Share to hold gardening classes starting on Saturday

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The first day of spring is Monday. Even though it's still wet and muddy outside, now is the perfect time to start planning your garden.

It's also a great time to start seeds indoors, said Heather McPherson, marketing and communications manager for the Marion-Polk Food Share.

The food share will begin hosting gardening classes, "Seed to Supper," on Saturday at Independence's Inspiration Garden at Mt. Fir Park, 756 G St. Classes will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays through April 8. A meal and children's activities will be provided.

A second workshop will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays beginning April 1 through May 6 at Colonia Amistad, 30 S. Gun Club Road. This workshop will be taught in Spanish. A meal will be provided.

The classes are taught by Marion County Master Gardeners and are free.

"We think that everybody should have access to healthy, fresh food," McPherson said. "One of the ways of doing that is to grow your own food in your own garden. It's a great way to stretch your food budget, give yourself access to healthy food, and grow the kind of food that you like."

The process of tackling a garden can be intimidating for some, she said.

"The Seed to Supper class is easy, fun, and taught by volunteers,"



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer file

Though it's still muddy and wet outside, it's the perfect time of year to begin planning a garden.

McPherson said. "It's a great way for people to get interested in growing food and get excited to grow their own food."

The class is a lot about the plan-

ning process of a garden, she said. "When the class is over in April and May, that's the perfect time to start planting," McPherson said. "They can start seeds indoors or

plant cool weather crops, like peas, now."

Afterward, participants will receive free seeds and starter plants.

See SEED, Page 6A

Emotional moment for MI's First Citizen



Monmouth Mayor Steve Milligan was honored as First Citizen at the 52nd Annual Monmouth-Independence Community Awards Banquet on Friday night. The evening honored businesses and individuals who serve the community. For more, see Page 11A.
HAUGEN'S GALLERY /for the Itemizer-Observer

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS
Zen Thai & Sushi offers taste of two worlds on one plate.
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FALLS CITY
Fix for roads damaged during winter weather will be difficult to find.
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INDEPENDENCE
Independence Police Department officers arrest six for driving under the influence in February.
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MONMOUTH
Monmouth City Council leaves marijuana zoning rules in place.
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EDUCATION
Art Houghtaling will do double duty as interim superintendent for Falls City School District.
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SPORTS
Western Oregon's distance medley relay team wins a national title.
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POLK COUNTY
Polk County officials join other O&C counties in a request for timber payment corrections.
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Oregon's unemployment rate drops
Itemizer-Observer staff report
SALEM — Oregon's unemployment rate dropped to 4.3 percent in January. The rate was 4.5 percent in December. This is the lowest rate since comparable records began in 1976, according to the Oregon Employment Department.

SPRING SPORTS
The complete guide to prep spring sports can be found inside.
»Section C

NEWSLETTER
Sign up for weekly news at polkio.com.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

<p>wed</p> <p>Enjoy the next part of Western Oregon University's Community Lecture Series. 3:30 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Rain Hi: 56 Lo: 39</p>	<p>thu</p> <p>Share your love of writing at the Dallas Senior Writing Group at Dallas Senior Center. 10 a.m. Free.</p> <p>Partly sunny Hi: 55 Lo: 39</p>	<p>fri</p> <p>Happy St. Patrick's Day! Get in the spirit of the Irish by wearing green today.</p> <p>Rain Hi: 53 Lo: 47</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>Come meet and chat with local police officers at Coffee with a Cop at the Independence McDonalds. 8 a.m. Free.</p> <p>Rain Hi: 52 Lo: 35</p>	<p>sun</p> <p>Western Oregon's baseball team will host Central Washington for a doubleheader, weather permitting. Noon. \$7.</p> <p>Partly cloudy Hi: 54 Lo: 37</p>	<p>mon</p> <p>Hooray! The first day of spring is upon us.</p> <p>Cloudy Hi: 57 Lo: 41</p>	<p>tue</p> <p>Have some rare coins? Come take part in the Polk County Coin Club at Monmouth Senior Center. 7 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Showers Hi: 54 Lo: 42</p>
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