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Deschutes Public Library eyes four new locations with potential for central library

Goal to have land question settled by August, according to executive director

BY BRENNIA VISSER

The Bulletin
The Deschutes Public Library system has identified four pieces of land that have potential to be the new site of its central library project, said Todd Dunkelberg, the library's executive director.

The library began re-searching new properties for the central library after the Bend City Council decided in March against an amendment that would have allowed the library to build the project on land it had purchased in north Bend.

The central library, which originally was proposed as a 100,000-square-foot building, was a key component promised in a \$195 million bond that voters passed in 2020. While the library board has not made an official decision to abandon the original 12-acre site off U.S. Highway 20 near Robal Lane, it appears to be the most promising path for the library system.

There are only two other ways the library could move forward on its original site. The neighboring landowner would have to agree to create a master plan with the library or the city would have to create an area plan for this section of town, which is within the urban growth boundary but not in the city limits. The neighbors thus far have not been interested, Dunkel-

berg said, and the city doesn't anticipate planning the area for another five to 10 years. Dunkelberg declined to share any details about the four replacement properties — chiefly, where they are located — as to not disrupt any potential real estate transactions, but he confirmed all four are in Bend. The goal is to have a definitive plan for the central library

decided by August, Dunkelberg said. "My hope is it would be resolved by then," Dunkelberg told The Bulletin. Very little is confirmed about the future of the central library, but some things that are known is that money to buy new land was not budgeted into the bond, Dunkelberg said.

See **Library** / A4

SNOWPACK STILL LACKING



Spring snow has little effect on Central Oregon drought conditions

BY MICHAEL KOHN • The Bulletin

Consistent snowfall this spring has helped boost Central Oregon snowpack to 133% of normal, a surprising jolt after a lackluster winter that saw below-average snowpack levels. Snowpack has steadily increased from just six weeks ago when the Upper Deschutes Basin was only 54% of normal. But while the snowpack has given Bend a pretty backdrop, the region's drought is still far from over. Recent snowfall is not the best indication of how much snow is actually in the mountains, said Kyle Gorman, region manager for the Oregon Water Resources Department.

See **Snow** / A4

«Central Oregon Irrigation District's outtake on the Deschutes River in southwest Bend flows with water on Thursday.
Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Ruling requires revisions for Central Oregon solar project expansion plan

BY MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI

Capital Press
To pass legal muster, a Central Oregon solar facility expansion plan must provide more specifics about mitigating impacts on wildlife habitat, according to a state land use ruling. However, the West Prineville Solar Farm's developer, NewSun Energy, is optimistic the project can now proceed with "only limited refinements to the plan criteria," said Jake Stephens, its CEO.

The state's Land Use Board of Appeals said Crook County approved doubling the solar facility's size, from 320 acres to 654 acres, without "substantial evidence" its wildlife plan will ensure quality habitat mitigation that's reliable and durable. The developer's wildlife plan also "lacks a schedule of performance measures" required under state law to ensure it will cause "no net loss" of habitat, the ruling said. Despite these issues, See **Solar** / A4

POLITICAL NOTEBOOK

Election rundown: Insurgents surge, Kristof's cash, a manual ballot fix

BY GARY A. WARNER

Oregon Capital Bureau
Despite having more than a third of the ballots in Oregon likely already cast, the May 17 primary election continues to generate controversy, campaign cash and colorful notes. More Oregonians have made their choice
With five days remaining, up to 38% of ballots have already been returned. The Oregon Secretary of State's

Office reports 383,163 ballots received as of Thursday. That's 13% of ballots sent out statewide. But based on the 2018 turnout, it would be more than 38% of votes in 2022. Turnout was behind the 2018 election, but projections are difficult to make because of the increase in total registered voters. The largest growth has been among "nonaffiliated" voters who primarily were registered while at the DMV for licenses or other activities.

Democrats and Republicans hold closed primaries, which excludes the nonaffiliated voters from casting ballots for governor, Congress and the Legislature. The 2022 election is also the first with a postmark law that allows any ballot bearing a May 17 postmark to be counted up through May 24. Cook Report says Schrader falls behind in reelection bid
A top political forecaster

reported Thursday that key internal Democratic polls show U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Canby, losing the May 17 primary to challenger Jamie McLeod-Skinner, a Terrebonne attorney. In an article titled "May Massacre," the Cook Political Report cited "multiple sources familiar with new polling data" that two moderate Democrats were in danger of losing reelection primary elections this month. See **Politics** / A4

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Afternoon rain
High 60, Low 50
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