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Ione School superintendent resigns

By April Sykes

Ione School Superintendent Karl Ostheller announced his resignation at the district's Monday night meeting. Ostheller said that his resignation, received by the board on March 8 and effective June 30, would allow him to "look for a better fit." He said he felt good about the accomplishments he achieved during his tenure. (See additional story, page 1.)

Board chair Joe McElligott thanked Ostheller for his service to the district and said that the district would begin the search for a new administrator immediately with the goal of having a new administrator on board on July 1.

During the meeting, the board agreed to base their budget on a conservative statewide school budget estimate of $5.8 billion, which would net around $1,483,883 in 2011 state basic school support with an estimated student population of 170 ADM (average daily membership). Based on a conservative $5.8 billion state budget, the district anticipates $6,559 per ADM, weighted with other factors. The district also set their 2009-10 ending fund balance at $375,000.

The board also approved receipt of an ARRA grant for more than $60,000 in federal stimulus money, to be used to provide new lighting for the school. The district had originally planned to retrofit the old school lighting as a part of their bond project, but the grant will enable the school to install new lighting in the classrooms and hallways.

Also at the meeting the board reviewed a draft policy of a telecommunications/electronic devices policy in anticipation of cell phone service possibly being established in Ione by this summer. The policy spells out what is allowed during school hours and what is not in terms of cell phone and personal electronic devices.

The district would prohibit the use of such devices in the elementary school and require elementary students to remain in the students' backpacks and be turned off during school hours or the student will face confiscation of the device. In that event, the device would be available for pickup at the office by the parent or guardian.

In the middle and high school, students may have and use these devices, however, the devices may not be in sight or be operated during the students' scheduled school hours. The devices may only be used before and after the regular school day and during lunch period unless an emergency situation exists or an administrator authorizes the student to use the device. However, a teacher may grant exceptions to the policy in his own classroom "if use contributes to instructional and/or educational efforts."

Students who violate the policy will be subject to "progressive disciplinary action."

In other business, the board:

-heard a bond project update from project manager Randy Hinrichsen of Willamette ESD.

-received a financial update from Beth O'Hanlon, chief fiscal officer, who reported that in February the district collected the following revenue: $121,609 in basic school support, $1,959 in property taxes, $4,549 in federal forest fees, $2,724 in the food service fund, primarily in food sales, $5,000 from Willow Creek Park District for the pool fund, $3,250 for Read N Play, the Cardinal Booster Club, $977 in property taxes for the bond fund and $80,000 in insurance proceeds from the roof, which leaked during a storm and caused damage to the new gym floor.

-accepted the resignation of janitor Craig Rea.

-held an executive session to discuss the appeal of a student's suspensions, negotiations and superintendent's evaluation.

-scheduled a meeting with the Education Foundation for April 8 at 6 a.m. in the school library.

-received the following administrative report:

*March's student enrollment increased to 181 (174 average daily membership) with 82 students in kindergarten through grade five, 34 students in grades six-eight and 65 students in grades nine-12, an increase of one student in the high school from the previous month.

*K-five students were allowed to put their handprints in the cement as it was poured for the front walk of the new elementary addition. The students' initials were also placed above the handprint.

*The horticulture class is on a field trip to the coast and the Spanish Club is to leave this weekend for their trip to Spain.

*A science fair and elementary carnival were "a big success."

Ostheller resigns as Ione superintendent/principal

Ione School District Superintendent and Principal Karl Ostheller has announced that he will resign his position, effective June 30, 2010.

Karl Ostheller

Ostheller's announcement will allow the Ione School Board to begin a new superintendent search immediately in hopes of having a new administrator hired by July 1, 2010.

"I'm looking forward to pursuing positions closer to family," Ostheller said. "I appreciate the time, friendships and memories I've made during my time in Ione. I wish the District and its wonderful staff and students the best of luck in their future endeavors."

Ostheller has served as superintendent/principal of the Ione School District since July 1, 2008.

"Mr. Ostheller has contributed to many successes in our District during his time in Ione," said School Board Chairman Joe McElligott. "These successes included balancing the budget during the economic crisis in education this past year and implementing a school-wide student behavior program."

The School Board accepted Ostheller's resignation at its regular meeting on March 15, and is preparing to begin the search process.

Snow not a damper for St. Pat's Weekend

Despite the snow, Vickie Lansford (right) and her daughter, Raelyn Lansford, take in St. Patrick's Celebration activities last Friday afternoon. More pictures from the St. Patrick's Celebration weekend can be found on Page FIVE. *–Photo by April Sykes*

Sunday program to discuss protecting agricultural water rights in Oregon

A group dedicated to protecting agricultural water rights in Oregon will be holding a public meeting Sunday, March 21, at 2 p.m. at Heppner High School. The program will be put on by Water for Life and is free and open to the public. The program will cover, among other things, what can be done to protect agriculture water rights in Oregon. The program is being sponsored by the Willow Creek Tea Party Patriots.

Helen Moore

According to Water for Life's web site "Water for Life was founded in 1990 by farmers and ranchers in Oregon's Klamath Basin to represent agricultural water users' concerns in legislative, legal and agency proceedings. As water issues and concerns began gaining more attention, the organization undertook the creation of a pro-agriculture group with the single-minded purpose of defending and promoting agricultural water rights. Their vision was of an organization devoted specifically to agricultural water issues and to approaching them from a producer perspective." Helen Moore, executive director of Water for Life will put on the program on Oregon water law, the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, and potential legislative issues for water users.

The following principals are also posted on the groups web site www.waterforlive.net:

1. Promote the public interest through good stewardship of water resources for the production of food and fiber.
2. Support American irrigated agriculture as beneficial to national security.
3. Protect agricultural water rights.
4. Protect and value water rights as private property rights.
5. Oppose the taking of private property without just compensation.
6. Uphold the doctrine of Prior Appropriation.
7. Promote responsible management of watersheds.
8. Achieve quality results through consistent, honest forthrightness.
9. Respectfully listen to divergent opinions, but never compromise our principles.

Also from the groups web site: "Water for Life fulfills our mission to promote agricultural water rights in a variety of ways. Specifically, we conduct our work through: **Advocacy:** Water for Life acts as a watchdog for agricultural water users. We work closely with agricultural producers and represent their interests during various agency meetings, hearings and workshops. We defend the public interest in legal proceedings and lobby in opposition to policies or legislation that would adversely affect agricultural water-right holders. **Promotion:** Water for Life sponsors and is integral in drafting legislation, administrative rules and policies that benefit and protect the interests of agricultural water right holders. **Education:** Water for Life seeks to educate the public and particularly the agricultural community on the development of administrative rules, legislation and policy affecting water right holders. Our staff and directors participate in various meetings, proceedings and events to inform people of the important role irrigated agriculture plays in the community and our economy as a whole.

"Water for Life, Inc. is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization that is funded by dedicated membership of charitable corporate, individual and associate donations. Many, but not all, of our members hold agricultural water rights, and represent a wide spectrum of commodity groups, including beef cattle, dairy cattle, hay, nurseries, potatoes, cranberries, onions, wheat, sheep and others. Members receive our quarterly newsletter and informational updates in addition to effective representation on water issues. Most importantly, our members are playing an active, integral role in protecting their water rights." The Willow Creek Tea Party Patriots is a local nonpartisan group promoting freedom of opportunity, fiscal responsibility, limited government and free enterprise.

Felda enters justice of the peace race

Terry Felda, 47, of Ione has thrown her hat in the ring to run for Morrow County Justice of the Peace.

Terry Felda

Born and raised in Wisconsin, Felda spent around 20 years in Philadelphia, PA before moving to Oregon four years ago to start a sheep dairy farm. Her farm, Tin Willows Dairy is the second dairy to be licensed as a Grade A dairy in the state. When she started the dairy Felda had 40 ewes. She now has 135 ewes.

Felda has an MA degree in government administration from the University of Pennsylvania. She has worked in all levels of government including: Melvin Laird fellow for the U.S. Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C.; assistant to the aviation director in Philadelphia, PA; and assistant to the township manager in Abington, PA. She currently is serving as council member for the Ione City Council.

Felda says she is used to working multiple full-time jobs. "I'm young," said Felda. "I haven't even begun to think about retirement yet. I have years to continue making a valuable contribution to this county as a justice, a farmer, and a taxpayer. Hard work and a lot of work don't scare me."

"Interestingly, the law, by not requiring a law degree, upholds the tradition of common sense, not legalese for justices," stated Felda. "Judge Gray did an excellent job combining common sense with statutory requirements. I intend to follow in her footsteps."

"I may not have been here a long time, but I moved here specifically to start a dairy," said Felda. "Just because someone has lived in one area for a long time doesn't mean they'll make a great justice. I have chosen to be here. Wouldn't you rather vote for someone who chose to stay here and shares your common values, work ethic, and ideals?"

Public education specialist to speak at chamber lunch meeting

This week's chamber lunch meeting will be held at City Hall on Thursday, March 18, from 12-1 p.m. The guest speaker will be Allen Freauff, public education specialist from Oregon OSHA.

The cost for lunch is $9 per person. Murray Drugs will be catering this week's meal.

Anyone planning to attend the weekly chamber lunch meetings is asked to RSVP by noon on the Wednesday before the meeting.

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