

SIPE:

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"I'd say it's for a student who is very determined and who has a vision and is willing to reach that goal," Sipe said.

That has never been an issue for Sipe, who said he has always been focused on his future and very determined.

"That's kind of another reason why I did it, too, because it was a challenge," he said.

Of course, his rigorous schedule did come with sacrifices, something his parents, Kyle and Heidi Sipe, wanted to make sure he understood would happen. They warned him embarking on such a path in high school would likely come at the expense of spending time with friends and doing other teenage activities.

Sipe said he never felt like he was missing out on anything.

Sipe said an active social life in college isn't

a big priority either, although he does look forward to eventually finding an apartment in the Tri-Cities and making some friends.

"I think professional relationships are a lot more important," he said.

Nor is he concerned about his age. He said mechanical engineering is not a degree someone can finish in two years, anyway, and he expects to graduate in three. Sipe also plans to finish his last year of college abroad working for an engineering company in either Germany or Switzerland, for which he will receive credit.

After that, Sipe said he might work for a couple of years to make sure he chose the right career field or he might just go straight on to graduate school and earn his master's degree and then maybe his doctorate.

"Life isn't about the experiences. It's about doing it," Sipe said. "It's about finishing it."

Stanfield residents impressed by downtown improvement plan

BY SEAN HART
HERMISTON HERALD

Stanfield residents were impressed by plans unveiled Wednesday to revitalize the downtown area.

At a public hearing about potential streetscape improvements on Highway 395 and Coe Avenue, City Manager Blair Larsen explained some of the possibilities and asked people for feedback on architectural plans.

The preliminary plans included a variety of options intended to improve the aesthetic appeal and encourage people to drive slower through town.

The ideas to improve the area included adding medians, better crosswalks, trees, decorative lighting and raising the intersection of Highway 395 and Coe Avenue to curb level, which would continue at that height to create a flat festival street on the first block to the west of the in-

tersection. Larsen said the city would be responsible for making any improvements on Coe Avenue, but he plans to apply for grant funding from the Oregon Department of Transportation to cover some of the costs for the improvements on the highway.

Larsen said public support of the project would help in the grant process. Most of the ideas were well-received, he said, but some people shared concerns about having medians in the center of town.

Resident Daniel Barton said he was not in favor of medians in the heart of Stanfield, but he liked most of the other proposed improvements. He said adding better crosswalks would make the area safer, and the other improvements might encourage people to stop in Stanfield.

"There's a lot of traffic coming through," he said. "There's so much potential for it. It's just what can we

do to make people stop and want to spend their time and money in Stanfield."

Resident Adam Lemmon said he too opposed medians in the center of town, but better trees and lighting would make the area more attractive. He said the raised intersection would probably slow people down, and the raised festival street on Coe Avenue would be a positive addition as long as it didn't further narrow the street.

"I like the idea of the festival street," he said. "I just hope they take into consideration all the farm equipment that travels through there."

Lisa Mavis, a member of the downtown revitalization committee, said the festival street, lighting and benches would greatly improve the area.

"It would make it look like a town that you don't want to blink when you drive through it," she said. "It would make it cozier. It would make it more invit-

ing, and hopefully people would be more interested in bringing their business into Stanfield. That is our hope."

Larsen said he intends to submit a grant application later this year for the next available round of funding, which is not until 2018 to 2021.

"My understanding is that funding is very limited," he said. "It makes it very competitive. I'm just going to have to put together a really solid application, and hopefully we can secure funding for that."

Larsen said the city may have to prioritize construction projects if it secures only partial funding. He said the intersection of Coe Avenue and Highway 395 would be a logical starting point and then as far out from there as funding would allow.

The downtown revitalization committee meets at 6:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month at the Stanfield Public Library.

CONTROL:

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tabase of all organic fields and beehives, the district will know where special insecticides should be applied.

Should the district have to spray the area for mosquitoes, it can take steps to maintain the integrity of the fields and the beehives. Gerard said it is possible non-organic certified insecticides could compromise a farmer's organic status, and he is trying to develop a database with the location of all organic fields. The district also wants to avoid harming bees, which serve vital roles in the environment.

"Our options are fairly limited at this time, but there are options, so we accommodate that the best we can," Gerard said.

He said he has about nine organic producers in the 525-mile district documented, and staff usually register beehives when they see them in areas.

"We do the same thing with beehives because we consider ourselves a bee-friendly mosquito control district," he said.

Because of warmer temperatures, control district staff began spraying for mosquitoes earlier this year — in March. Entering summer, Gerard said the mosquito population is about average for this time of year.

"I wouldn't say we have any more or any less mosquitoes than we normally do at this time," he said.

With the recent heat wave and higher temperatures at this time of year, however, Gerard said he expects the mosquito population to grow.

Gerard said the control district staff is applying insecticide to kill mosquito larvae in the common mosquito breeding grounds. It

doesn't, however, kill adult mosquitoes until enough of them are deemed problems in certain areas. They also can't control mosquitoes on people's properties, such as back yards.

Mosquito breeding is very dependent on the weather, Gerard said, but this time of year, it takes a mosquito about a week to go from an egg to an adult. If people do not regularly check for and empty containers with standing water, in a short period of time, residents could have mosquitoes hatching. That's why Gerard said a point he is stressing this summer is for residents to eliminate standing water on their properties by turning over buckets and regularly flushing out horse troughs and cleaning bird baths.

Because the type of mosquito that carries west Nile virus is found in the area, it is especially important to be vigilant.

In 2014, the mosquito control district tested 700 samples of mosquito larvae, with approximately 50 mosquitoes in a sample, and three came back positive for west Nile virus. One bird also tested positive, as well.

Gerard said 2009 was the worst year for west Nile virus, with 89 positive mosquito samples and the virus found in three horses, nine birds and one human.

"We monitor each year as if we're going to have the worst year ever," Gerard said.

Control district staff will continue setting traps throughout the summer and testing mosquitoes for west Nile.

People are encouraged to call the mosquito control district if they find dead crows, ravens, magpies, jays and robins.

If the bird is found within 24 hours of its death,

control district staff can swab its saliva, which is then tested for the virus.

"Those particular birds

have shown to be susceptible to the virus, and that's why we use them as a sentinel," Gerard said.

People can also take steps to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes by avoiding going out when the insects

are active — at dawn and dusk, wearing light-colored clothing and using insect spray.

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