

Website provides resources for homecare workforce

Aging & People with Disabilities and the Oregon Home Care Commission have launched a new tool for individuals seeking to join the homecare workforce.

The site offers people the ability to register to attend a "New Worker Orientation." The benefits of joining the homecare workforce include paid time off, health insurance, workers' compensation, paid trainings and opportunities for career advancement.

One of the goals of the Oregon Home Care Commission is to attract a committed and diverse homecare workforce to meet the specific needs of Oregonians who are older adults and people with disabilities.

Homecare workers provide in-home services for consumers who are eligible for publicly funded in-home programs. Individuals interested in the homecare workforce should have excellent communication skills, attention to detail, flexibility, problem-solving and the ability to follow directions. They should also exhibit respect for others and have a passion for helping people.

For more information, visit www.oregon.gov/DHS/seniors-disabilities.

Echo development would bring hotel, amphitheater, RV park

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
Staff Writer

A project being cooked up by Kent Madison could double the city of Echo's tax base and solve its sewer problems in one fell swoop.

That's what Madison told a standing-room only crowd at Echo's city council meeting Thursday afternoon. He and his wife Laura are looking to create a development along Thielsen Road between Echo and the Interstate 84 interchange near Stanfield that would include an RV park, 10,000-person amphitheater, hotel, restaurant, laundromat, light industrial project and green space.

It would be quite the growth spurt for Echo, population 704. "It's going to be different," Madison said. "I can't tell you Echo is going to be the same. You may have to wait in line at the H&P Cafe."

Since the development at full build-out would likely double Echo's water and sewer needs, overwhelming its current system, Madison said he would be willing to pay to build a new system and hand it over to the city after it was complete.

Echo has been struggling for about 12 years to get a wastewater

"If the public of Echo is adamantly opposed to it, we have better things to do."

- Kent Madison

ter treatment project going after the Department of Environmental Quality put the city on notice that the recycled water it has been discharging into the Umatilla River does not meet standards for biological oxygen demand. The city is on its sixth extension of an interim agreement with the agency after running into roadblocks on everything from shifting regulations to a lack of viable funding sources.

The city notified Echo resident Michael Yunker in December that if he did not voluntarily sell 10 acres of his 65-acre ranch north of Echo, the city could use eminent domain to force the sale so that it could build a pond and irrigation field to take in the water currently being released into the Umatilla River. Yunker has voiced strong opposition to selling.

Madison said he would be willing to take that water and process it which, in conjunction with a well he would drill, could be used to irrigate the RV park and

surrounding green space.

"We would do the legwork, we would drill the well, create the new sewer structure, and then we would hand it over to the city. They would all become city assets," he said.

The city would have to take on the responsibility of maintenance, he said, but would also double its sewer and water revenue once the project was finished.

The Madisons do not currently own the 132-acre dryland wheat parcel in question, but it is for sale. They said if Echo supports their vision, they are willing to buy the whole tract, develop the RV park and start recruiting a hotel and other companies to develop the rest. But the Madisons won't buy the property until they're sure the project, including sewer and water improvements, will work financially and have the support of the city.

"If the public of Echo is adamantly opposed to it, we have

better things to do," Madison said. "We don't want to fight you all the way."

He said the project would need annexed into the city. He has also been discussing with the Oregon Department of Transportation the need to turn Thielsen Road into a three-lane highway with a frontage road to handle the increased traffic.

People who came to hear Madison's presentation had concerns and questions about the development's impact on Echo's quality of life and on property values.

Craig Cooley, a resident of nearby Echo Heights, said he and his wife had concerns about noise from the amphitheater and about the new well's impact on their own water supply. Others echoed that concern and added their own worries about parking, traffic and that a light industrial project could bring nuisances along with it.

"How much collateral damage will there be?" Cooley asked.

Madison said there could be noise ordinances put into place to make sure sound from the amphitheater wasn't overly burdensome on neighbors. He said the well, at 1,500 feet, would be deep enough that it "theoretically wouldn't be touching your aquifer."

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STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Bethany Newton
Griswold High School

Bethany Newton is currently a senior at Griswold High School. She is the Associated Student Body President and is co-Valedictorian of her class. She has lettered in multiple sports throughout her high school career. She recently placed 1st in two events at the district track meet which qualified her for her fourth visit to the state competition in Eugene. She is a member of the National Honor Society, Key Club, and FBLA at Griswold High School. After graduation, Bethany plans on attending the University of Idaho where she will pursue studies in the agriculture field. Congratulations Miss Newton!

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