

47J Long Range Planning Committee plans for future building needs

By Schann Nelson

A lot of information has been gathered since early January, when the Vernonia School District board approved the long range planning committee (LRPC) recommendation to hire Dull Olson Weekes (DOWA) to develop of a comprehensive long-range plan for district facilities. The committee has worked to begin identifying issues and develop an agenda for a town hall meeting to be held March 15 at 6:00 in the Middle School cafeteria.

This meeting – the first of two – will include a presentation of the capacity study and a review of existing reports. The district's needs, as identified by the committee, will also be presented. The public is invited to provide the committee with their needs and desires for these important community facilities at this time. Public comments will be used by the LRPC to help evaluate options

as they are developed. This is your opportunity to voice your opinion BEFORE the LRPC begins to develop and evaluate options. A second town hall meeting will be held to gather public comment on the options developed by the LRPC.

The first task completed by the committee and DOWA is a study of the capacity and condition of existing facilities. Much of the work regarding the condition of existing facilities was completed in the past. The estimated cost of renovating and upgrading Washington Grade School and the high school was first completed in 2001, updated in 2002 (due to a change in the seismic classification of the area), and updated again as part of the current committee work.

It is critical for taxpayers to understand that mechanical, electrical and seismic renovations, and the addition of much-needed handicapped access,

do NOT include any modifications designed to improve educational capacity. These upgrades would bring the existing building 'up to code' but would not improve communication, security, technology, traffic, gym space, or anything else. In addition, seismic upgrades are not designed to keep the building from falling down; they are designed to keep hallways and doors from collapsing long enough to get people out. The estimated cost of these modifications (as of October 2005) is almost \$9.15 million; an extraordinary amount of money to ask voters to support for what would essentially be the same buildings and facilities.

Another part of the capacity study identified existing and future educational program needs. A staff survey indicates the need for flexible classroom space, adequate storage (classroom, sports and leadership), improved technology and

telecommunications, conference rooms, commons area and workspace. These are basics that teachers need to provide twenty-first century students with full integration of technology in the classroom, activity-based learning, and working in small groups on interdisciplinary projects.

At their last meeting, the committee reviewed the enrollment and capacity study presented by Renee Kroupa of DOWA. Using standard formulas to evaluate the existing facility and projecting future enrollment, Kroupa demonstrated that the district is now uncomfortably close to capacity, including the use of portable classrooms. If portable classrooms were eliminated from the evaluation, the district is over

capacity by nearly two full classes (59 students).

Enrollment is now about 715 students and the recent study shows district capacity – with portable classrooms – of 749 students. Using a simple annual percentage growth rate, district enrollment is projected to reach 1000 students by 2016. Using this data, the district will be over capacity by the end of the next school year, even with the use of portable classrooms. At this point, the committee does not know if this is an accurate estimate. Committee member Robyn Bassett reported that the city would soon begin working with the Center for Population Growth, at Portland State University, to develop new estimates of growth.

Time to have a say in forest plans now

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fits to Oregonians. Most of the revenue from timber sales is distributed to county governments and local taxing districts, and to the Common School Fund to benefit schools throughout the state. The objectives in district annual operations plans are based on the goals and strategies found in the long-range forest management plans.

The Northwest Oregon State Forests Management Plan provides guidance for 616,000 acres in the following districts: Astoria (Clatsop State Forest), Tillamook (western two-thirds of the Tillamook State Forest), Forest Grove (eastern one-third of the Tillamook), Cascade (Santiam State Forest), West Oregon (scattered tracts in Benton, Polk and Lincoln counties), and Western Lane (scattered tracts in Lane County).

The Southwest Oregon State Forest Management Plan covers 18,000 acres of blocked and scattered lands in Josephine, Douglas, Curry and Jackson counties.

Forest management plans may be requested from district offices or from the ODF headquarters in Salem. The contact person in Salem is planning specialist Roger Welty, who may be contacted by phone

(503-945-7258) or e-mail rwelty@odf.state.or.us.

Each district covered by the Northwest Oregon State Forests Management Plan and Southwest Oregon State Forest Management Plan has a 10-year implementation plan that describes how the management activities will achieve the goals of the forest management plans. The implementation plans are posted on the ODF web site http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/STATE_FOREST_S/planning.shtml

The public involvement process provides an opportunity for ODF districts to share their annual plans with the public. It also is a time for the public to ask questions and offer comments on the planned activities on state forestlands.

When reviewing and commenting on an annual operations plan, it may be helpful to use the less-technical summary document as a starting point. If questions arise, refer to the more detail-oriented pre-operations reports. Written comments providing the most useful suggestions should focus on one or more of the following:

- Enhancing the consistency of an annual plan with the forest management plan and (for districts covered by NW and SW plans) the district implementa-

tion plan.

- Improving the clarity of an annual plan.
- Providing new information that will affect an annual plan (such as location of a domestic water source or a cultural resource site).
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of an annual plan or planned operation.

Comments and questions may be sent to ODF district offices or the Salem headquarters. They may also be e-mailed to Salem (specific district should be identified) to rwelty@odf.state.us. Addresses and fax numbers follow:

- State Forests Program, Oregon Department of Forestry, Attn: Roger Welty, 2600 State St., Salem, OR 97310. Fax: 503-945-7376.
- Astoria District (Clatsop State Forest), 92219 Hwy 202, Astoria, OR 97103. Fax: 503-325-2756.
- Forest Grove District (eastern one-third Tillamook State Forest), 801 Gales Creek Road, Forest Grove, OR 97116. Fax: 503-357-4548.
- Tillamook District (western two-thirds Tillamook State Forest), 5005 East 3rd St., Tillamook, OR 97141. Fax: 503-842-3143.

For addresses of other districts, contact any ODF office.

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