

School Board work session focuses on 2009-10 budgetary losses

Discussion of potential response to the failure of the bond measure began the work session prior to the Banks School Board meeting on November 17. Superintendent Marv Ott told the board that unofficial election results show the bond measure lost by 77 votes, about two-percent. A recount may be requested, but all costs associated with the recount (including attorney fees, court costs and election staff time) are paid by the loser of the recounted vote, an expense risk that Ott did not advise.

The board praised the efforts of the facilities committee and the PAC. Discussion of possible reasons for the measure's failure included an apparent loss of effort towards the end of the campaign, insufficient professional guidance for the PAC, damage from misinformation, and failure to get early support from staff. Debbie Wycoff, PAC treasurer, told the board that the PAC was receiving calls offering new donations for a continued campaign. Board Member William Moore put a damper on discussion of a new at-

tempt when he said that an election official had told him that the double majority requirement was only extended to even numbered years in the recently passed measure. Ott said that lots of discussion at the Oregon School Board Association convention he recently attended was about being able to propose tax and bond measures on the May '09 ballot. Ott will get clarification, saying that he would "hate to lose momentum."

Continuing his report from the OSBA convention, Ott related that Governor Kulongoski said that School Improvement Funds will not be distributed for the second half of the biennium. This will mean a \$285,000 reduction in expected revenue for the district. Ott and district business manager Simon Levear have begun looking at the budget to identify where to make cuts. School districts across the state have begun to add back programs cut in the last round of extreme budget reduction, like the return of junior high sports in Banks. Now all programs will have to be looked at again. Levear told the board that the transportation contract dated from the 1970s,

though many revisions and adjustments had been made over the years. He received approval to begin a competitive bid process to ensure that the district is getting the best possible deal. Ott concluded this dismal discussion of finances by telling the board that "things are worse now than they were ten years ago."

The board meeting following the workshop was exceptionally short because a scheduled presentation from sixth grade Outdoor School students was

removed from the agenda at their request. Bob Huston introduced two teachers; Linda Beauchaine is new to the district and Jo Shilling has moved to a full-time position in first grade. Mr. Ott announced the failure of the bond and there was a brief discussion reiterating the earlier discussion at the workshop.

Board member Kathy Edison said that the state football playoff game in Baker City was well attended. She said that several players told her that the support

from the stands was an important part of winning that competition. High School Principal Jim Foster said that it was a very tough game, well fought and won. The next playoff game will be at home on Kelly Field tomorrow night. Board chairman Duane Lundsten said that all of the board members present were planning on being there and he encouraged the community to attend and support the team.

Banks Tree Board reports annual planting



The Banks Tree Board planted two new ornamental smoke bush (Cotinus) royal purple trees. The Fall educational and tree planting event was held November 15 at the Banks "Welcome" sign (located at the cloverleaf exit of state Highway 6 and state Highway 47.) Tree Board member Mike Lyda, of Lyda Excavating, dug the holes for the two beautiful ornamentals. Tree Board members Mitty Brady, Mike Lyda, and Fran Todd were on hand, as was Banks Public Works Director Jim Hough. Oteka Todd, the granddaughter of Fran Todd was also attended to learn about trees and the best time to plant them (November). The day was designated Fall Tree Planting Day in Banks by a Proclamation issued by the Mayor and City Council.

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