



The Friday Update

Bringing you a summary of weekly news from City Hall

January 29, 1999

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MAYOR VERGER REFLECTS ON HER WEEK IN SALEM – Two weeks ago Mayor Joanne Verger spent a week at the State Capitol while acting in her capacity as this year’s President of the League of Oregon Cities. Here is what she has to say about that experience, courtesy of LOC’s January 22, 1999 newsletter:

“Salem isn’t always thought of as a destination spot, but for me, as the new President of the League of Oregon Cities, it was “the place to be” last week as the 1999 Legislative Session opened. I decided to leave Coos Bay to spend a week in Salem for several reasons. I wanted to offer our legislators a chance to meet me personally as one of the League’s policy makers. I wanted to listen to their thoughts and concerns about cities. And, I wanted to stress the importance of our four key legislative issues: transportation needs, infrastructure funding, PERS reform, and programs for youth, by bringing them “Special Delivery” to the legislature.

It was a rewarding week, as many doors were opened to me. I had the opportunity to meet with Speaker Snodgrass, President Adams, and with majority and minority leaders. The substantive dialogue with legislative leadership was immediately helpful to me and to staff, and will continue to help our work to protect the interests of all of Oregon’s cities. Being present at the opening session of the 70th Legislative Assembly and testifying on the League’s behalf at two hearings made me even more aware of the need for the League’s professional presence and vigilance at the Capitol.

Already, more than 800 bills have been introduced, and the session is in high gear. Many of the issues under consideration will affect cities, either positively or negatively. I want to report to you that our professional staff is there, and will be there though sine die, but they need our help.

What can you do? Come to Salem and talk to your city’s legislators. Testify on bills that will affect cities, describing the very real effects on your community. Respond to requests from LOC staff to help analyze the effects of legislation. Keep a running dialogue with your senators and representatives on the issues that affect your mutual constituents. I’ll be back in Salem as the session progresses. See you there.”

H.M. BARK ENDEAVOUR TO VISIT COOS BAY! – The tall ship H.M. Bark Endeavour, a replica of Lt. James Cook’s 18th century sailing vessel, will be arriving at the Coos Bay Boardwalk for ten days of tours at City Dock this summer. Mark your calendars and don’t miss this one! July 9th through July 19th. Endeavour is three times the size of the tall ship Lady Washington, which has become a favorite visitor at City Dock. We’ll have lots more to tell you about Endeavour before this summer, but for now, why not pay a virtual visit to this beautiful ship? See <http://www.barkendeavour.com.au/>

OREGON COAST MUSIC ASSOCIATION SPORTS NEW WEB PAGE! – OCMA is proudly sporting a new website and new e-mail address. OCMA webmaster Nancy Price invites you to visit the Association’s new Internet home at <http://www.coosnet.com/music/> and make a note of its new e-mail address, music@coosnet.com. OCMA has an exciting concert planned for Sunday afternoon, February 21st, at the Boathouse at Oregon Institute of Marine Biology in Charleston, followed by dinner in the OIMB Dining Hall. Visit <http://www.coosnet.com/music/> and read all about it!

CITY FRANCHISE FEES TO BE DEBATED – According to the most recent League of Oregon Cities newsletter, “city franchise fees and privilege taxes will be part of the electric industry restructuring debate. Under ‘direct access’ (also called ‘open access’ or ‘customer choice’), utility customers may choose alternative energy suppliers. That means an electric utility’s gross revenues (the basis for franchise fees and privilege taxes) will decrease, and consequently, city franchise fee and privilege tax revenues will be reduced. These revenues have become an important component of general fund support in Oregon cities. Often, they are the second largest revenue source in the general fund. The League and cities will urge legislators to pass legislation which ensures continued city authority to collect franchise fees and privilege taxes.”

This is a serious issue that Coos Bay residents need to understand. Franchise fees generate over \$700,000 each year to help support the City of Coos Bay services provided. With declining property taxes due to BM 50, it is imperative that franchise fees be preserved at current levels if service cuts are to be avoided!

BUSINESS SUPPORTS TRANSPORTATION FUNDING INCREASES – The most recent edition of the League of Oregon Cities newsletter provides this report about transportation funding under consideration by the Oregon Legislature: “Discussion of transportation funding in the legislature is focused on HB 2082, Road Funding Package, filed by the House Interim Transportation Committee at the request of the Associated Oregon Industries (AOI). When fully implemented the bill will increase city funding from the Highway Fund by \$36 million dollars per year, a 39% increase.

The advocacy of the business community for a tax increase makes a powerful statement to the legislature about the critical need for additional transportation funds. The AOI bill includes a 3-cent increase in the gas tax (with a corresponding increase in truck taxes) on January 1, 2000 and a second increase that will take effect on September 1, 2001. The second increase is contingent on the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) meeting performance goals. The bill also includes a \$10 registration fee. The new funds generated from the bill will increase cities’ and counties’ share by 5% each. While the split intended in the bill is 50% ODOT / 30% counties / and 20% to cities, a drafting error has cities and counties both receiving 25%. The measure modifies the administration of the weigh-mile tax, reducing the trucking industries administrative costs.

According to House Speaker Lynn Snodgrass (R-Boring), the issue of ODOT accountability has to be addressed before a package can come up for a vote in the House. Rep. Jane Lokan (R-Milwaukie) has a bill being drafted to increase ODOT’s accountability to the Legislature. Her bill will probably be the vehicle through which this topic is addressed. Rep. Lokan has included League staff in discussions leading to the development of her proposal.

Some legislators have raised the issue of a “local-only” package, i.e. apportion the proceeds from a tax increase only to cities and counties. This sentiment is based on several different factors: a lack of confidence in the department, greater understanding of local needs and the fact that a local-only increase will have much less impact on truck taxes. The League remains committed to pursuing a package that addresses needs on both local and state roads. A local only package would jeopardize the support of the business community.

A working group composed of the various segments of the trucking industry, cities and counties, ODOT, AOI, the American Automobile Association (AAA) has been meeting to reach agreement on the impact of the Oregon Trucking Association’s proposal to eliminate the weight-mile tax and replace it with a 25 cent per gallon tax on diesel fuel and a tenfold increase in truck registration fees. The group will also try to determine to what degree the proposal shifts taxes from out of state truckers onto instate firms. The workgroup will forward its information for use as the foundation for legislators discussion of truck taxation.

VOLUNTEERING IN YOUR COMMUNITY – Fiddlesticks owners Gary and Karla Rifkin began a project one year ago to increase volunteer efforts in the Coos Bay area. The idea was to create a video highlighting how volunteers benefit the community. They used profits from the sale of the original Princess Beanie Babies to fund the video project. The money was collected in a tax deductible manner with the help of United Way

of Southwestern Oregon. Volunteer efforts at public schools, South Coast Hospice, Helpline, RSVP and more work were featured. The video will be shown on Government Access Television (channel 14). For more information about the video contact Gary at 267-3713.

LIBRARY RECEIVES WEYERHAEUSER GRANT – Mayor Verger was on hand recently to accept a grant award for the library from Timm Slater of the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation. The \$10,000 Foundation grant will fund the furnishing of the new library children's room. The library is pleased to be able to recognize the Foundation's generous contribution through naming of this special room for Weyerhaeuser.

DEQ PUBLIC MEETING RESCHEDULED – Due to a scheduling conflict, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has rescheduled the public meeting to discuss the ongoing environmental cleanup projects at Mid-Coast Marine, Southern Oregon Marine, and the Charleston Boatyard. The meeting will now be held on Thursday, February 18, 1999 at 7 p.m. in the Coos Bay City Council Chambers at City Hall.

The purpose of the meeting is to inform the public about the cleanup projects. Discussion will include the federal deferrals of the sites to the State, the current status of the project, anticipated future work, and approximate project schedules. There will also be an opportunity for the public to ask questions pertaining to the projects.

FONSI MEETING SCHEDULED – Friends of New and Sustainable Industry (FONSI) have scheduled a general membership meeting for Thursday, February 4, 1999 at 7 p.m. at the North Bend Community Center. During the past year, the FONSI membership and others worked hard to ensure continued air service at the North Bend Airport Business Park. An equally important goal previously developed by the membership is to bring natural gas to Coos County. A subcommittee of FONSI, chaired by Tim Bishop, has been working on this goal. While there are many details yet to be determined, it is time to bring the membership together to discuss ideas and options that have been developed regarding natural gas and to hear the member's thoughts on this issue.

If the pipeline were constructed, the results would bring significant benefits. According to a consultant who was hired to assess the economic and fiscal impacts of the proposed construction of a natural gas pipeline and distribution system in Coos County, just a few of these benefits are:

- Construction of the natural gas pipeline and the economic activity will stimulate the local economy and will create approximately 280 jobs during the construction period resulting in almost \$5 million in employee compensation.
- The availability of natural gas energy will expand the manufacturing base of Coos County. Estimated benefits over a 20-year time period are \$783 million in personal income and \$284 in business income. This will cause an increase in annual employment averaging 1,290 full-time jobs.
- The lower energy costs to households and businesses will stimulate spending and result in an additional \$11.1 million and \$6.12 million in personal and business income, respectively, over a twenty year time period. In addition, these savings will support the creation of another 32 full-time jobs a year in the economy.

Anyone interested in attending is welcome – bring a friend! Information provided by FONSI.

CITY OF COOS BAY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY ADOPTS PLAN – The Emergency Management Agency for the City of Coos Bay met on Friday and adopted the Emergency Operations Plan. The Plan will be submitted to the City Council for review at their regular meeting on February 2nd.

The Plan assigns responsibility to departments and individuals for carrying out specific actions at projected times and places in an emergency. The Plan also sets forth lines of authority and organizational relationships and shows how all actions will be coordinated; describes how people and property will be

protected in emergencies and disasters; and identifies personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies and other resources available within the jurisdiction or by agreement with other jurisdictions, for use during response and recovery operations.

1998 FIRE DEPARTMENT STATS – The Fire Department responded to a total of 1,351 emergency calls in 1998. Of those calls 29.3 percent were fire related and 70.7 percent were EMS related. The busiest piece of equipment was rescue unit 8171, housed at Station # 1 (4th Street) with a total response of 497 calls. June was the busiest month of the year with 138 responses and February was the least busiest month with a total of 96 emergency responses.

MARSHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL NEWS – The following Marshfield High news is brought to you by associated student body publicist Sarah Richardson.

Attention all senior citizens! Saturday, February 13, the Marshfield Student Council will be hosting a Senior Citizen Dance. The dance will be held at the Coos Bay Convention Center from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be a live band, door prizes and a cake walk. Admission is free!

Saturday, January 30, the Marshfield Dance Team will be hosting the South Coast Invitational dance competition. Five 3A teams and four 4A teams will be competing. The Upbeats will dance after the second round, but they will not be competing.

Congratulations to Sara Cunningham the January Girl of the Month. Sara is a 3 sport athlete. She has been named Most Valuable Player in soccer, basketball and track. Sara is a member of the National Honor Society and Key Club. She often volunteers her time to students with special needs and SWOYA.

Congratulations to the Marshfield Dance Team. Saturday, January 16, the Upbeats traveled to Thurston for a dance competition. At the competition the team placed 2nd overall and received the Best Costume and Inspection Award. More congratulations to Jade Boardman, Ashley Pennington, Valerie Gulseth and Nora Heckard, who qualified for the Top Ten in the Drill Down competition.

Saturday, February 6, the Marshfield Cheer Team will be traveling to Portland for the state cheer team competition. The competition will be held at the Portland Coliseum, admission will be \$7 for adults and \$5 for students. The 4A round begins at 2 p.m. Come support the Cheer team! Last year they placed 2nd overall and this year the team hopes to bring home a first place trophy. Arnie Roblan will be driving a rooter bus up to this event, anyone interested in riding the bus may contact Mr. Enlge at 267-1412.

Friday, February 5, all semester report cards will be mailed home. Students prepare for your punishment, or congratulations, (depending on what mom and dad think of your grades).

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS TEAM – State agency department representatives from the Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Land Conservation and Development and the Economic Development Department will sit down with Mayor Joanne Verger and City staff to discuss Front Street development next Friday, February 5th. The Community Solutions Team concept is intended to bring state agencies together to achieve a coordinated approach to addressing local development issues. The Community Solutions Team has held one meeting with the full City Council and this second meeting should produce some practical, real-time results consistent with the policy issues that came out of that first meeting. City staff are anticipating a very productive session. We'll keep you informed.

IRS TAKES FREE CUSTOMER SERVICE ON THE ROAD – Taxpayers in a number of communities in Oregon and Eastern Washington won't have to go far from home to get free in-person tax assistance this filing season. The IRS Tax Mobile, a thirty foot motor home that the IRS has leased for the tax season, will go on the road at the end of this month, bringing customer service to many county seats and community centers. Tax Mobile staff will answer questions, distribute forms, help with tax problems, and even prepare basic individual tax returns.

The Tax Mobile will begin its service in Oregon City, then head to the Oregon coast. It will travel to Eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington before the April 15th tax deadline. The Tax Mobile will be in Coos

Bay on February 3rd and 4th at 295 South 10th Street from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

This is the first year the IRS has taken free customer service on the road. The project was coordinated by Oregon IRS employees who wanted to make free tax help available to people in communities that are some distance from an IRS walk-in office. Persons needing assistance who cannot visit the Tax Mobile or an IRS walk-in office can call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040. The service is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

PARKING LOT RENOVATIONS – At last the paving of the downtown parking lots has started in between rain and cool weather. Umpqua Navigation is performing the work in the lots north of Curtis, next to the Hall building, and next to Jennie's. Work will proceed as weather permits and should be in fine shape for the upcoming Governors Tourism Conference in April. These lots have not had any work on them for almost thirty years. The City appreciates your patience over the inconvenience that the work causes, but it will make a much cleaner looking downtown.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT GRANT -- The Community Services Department has applied for two ODOT enhancement projects; one along South Empire Boulevard and the other along Newmark Avenue by Southwestern. The project along Newmark is the first priority, if both cannot be funded the first year.

PARKING COMMITTEE -- The City Council appointed downtown parking committee held its second very well attended meeting Thursday evening, January 28. The committee heard from concerned citizens, discussed several alternatives to address those concerns and developed the following recommendation to forward to the City Council for its consideration:

1. Designate all downtown parking lots for 3-hour parking. Employee permit parking should be allowed in any 3-hour parking lot.
2. The downtown parking lot behind the Art Museum and across Curtis Street from Key Title should be designated as a free parking lot with no time limit imposed.
3. On-street parking from Curtis Street to Market and from Bayshore to 4th Street should be 90-minute parking. No employee permit parking should be allowed on-street in this area.
4. On-street parking on the east side of Bayshore from Elrod to Market should be 3-hour parking. Employee permit parking should be allowed in this area.
5. The fee for employee parking permits should be \$6.50 per month.

The parking committee's recommendations will be considered by the City Council at the Council's February 2, 1998 meeting. The parking committee has worked very hard in putting its recommendations together for the City Council. The committee members deserve our appreciation for their conscientious attention to their task. Members of the parking committee are Trish Midyette, Chair, Flora Lee Lockhart, Vice-Chair, Ralph Larson, Cindi Miller, Judy Weeks and Jeff McKeown. Staff support to the parking committee is organized by Captain Jack Bushmaker, Coos Bay Police Department.