



The Friday Update

Bringing you a summary of weekly news from City Hall

December 17, 1999

CITY OF COOS BAY

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CHAMBER ANNUAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FORUM DRAWS 280 ATTENDEES -- This morning's Annual Economic Outlook Forum, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, City of Coos Bay and others, drew an attentive crowd of over 280 attendees. Community Services Director Bill Finney was on hand to staff a City display depicting the Front Street Master Plan, reporting that it was the first time a number of folks had seen the drawings for this pending redevelopment area.

Speaking first was Oregon Employment Division economist John Anderson. He reported that local unemployment had dropped to 8.5% and described this as an improvement, although quickly added that this is still twice the state's rate. Based on a recent survey, he said that "quality of life and retirement are the main reasons that folks are moving here. Among other things, Mr. Anderson indicated that nonfarm employment is up 1% from a year ago, and this marks the first increase for the area in seven years. Several attending noted that Anderson's comments were more encouraging than expected, and in fact he made special note of the promising things happening in the area. He indicated that new construction in the area is promising, as is the NB airport expansion and business park development that is underway. He noted that school building and hospital construction projects reflect the fact that local needs are being met. And he added that Various corporate headquarters are recognizing the region's potential by making investments in commercial developments. He concluded his remarks by noting emphasizing he "felt very positive about the next 5-10 years, and that this is not just wishful thinking."

Livability Committee Chair John Sweet spoke next, describing the emergence of the new, South Coast Development Council (SCDC). Mr. Sweet explained that its purpose is to help create and retain family wage jobs by undertaking various focused marketing and related activities. SCDC will be a private/public partnership with the expectation of being the central marketing and economic development engine for the area. Implementation is expected next year after funding is in place.

Bandon Dunes general manager Josh Lesnik then described the progress and successes of the South Coast's new world-class golf course and resort. He said the Lodge opened last July and that today 4 cottages and 20 hotel rooms provide lodging for golfers from all over the country. "The facility's first year expectations were exceeded by 250%," he announced. Golf magazine has described the course as the 44th best in the country and 88th best in the world, according to Lesnik. Golf Digest had rated Bandon Dunes as the "Number 1 new, up-scale course in the USA for 1999," he said with pride. Another course is soon to be under development. Bandon Dunes employs 120 to 140 employees, with another 100 caddies working as independent contractors.

Lesnik concluded his comments by noting that Bandon Dunes is very much a part of the community. Owner Mike Keiser has made generous donations to the Boys and Girls Club, the Southwestern Oregon Community College Foundation as well as to a number of Bandon charities.

Port of Coos Bay general manager Allan Rumbaugh provided updates about the NB Airport and the Coos Bay rail bridge situation, followed by Coos County Commissioner Nikki Whitty. She spoke about the natural gas line project, expressing concerns about the State of Oregon backing away from its commitment to cost-share in the project. Commissioner Whitty stressed the importance of avoiding delays, noting that a one-year delay could add \$2 million to project cost. Said concluded her remarks by praising the area's good fortune in securing fiber-optic capacity through Fiber South Consortium and declared that "telecommunications is equally important" to natural gas in getting the region's economic engine moving again.

On that note, 800 Support's John Stadter spoke of the commitment his company is making in moving to the area, but noted that "We ended up here because my wife and I were looking for a place to raise our son." "The message here is lifestyle," he explained, recognizing the fine quality of life that South Coast residents enjoy. Lane County Commissioner Cindy Weeldreyer described the "miracle" of fiber South Consortium, describing how local governments have partnered to negotiate access to broad-band communication capacity for the benefit of the area. Former Reedsport mayor Ted Walters spoke about the "Western Douglas Marketing Plan" and efforts the Reedsport community is taking to move forward after the job losses from the International Paper mill closure. "Very inspirational," was the way forum moderator Greg Stevens described Walters' comments.

U.S. Bancorp economist John Mitchell informed and entertained the captivated audience with a 60-minute Powerpoint presentation on the state of the economy, covering everything from "soup to nuts." "We are in a remarkable time," said Dr. Mitchell, noting that the country is currently in the 105th month of a national expansion. In February, if modest growth holds as expected, the country will be in its longest expansion ever, he noted. except for a short downturn (8 mos.), USA has seen 17 yrs of growth. "If you're under 33 yrs old, you've never seen a serious recession." Look for year 2000 indicators to be not much different from this past year, he said.

The forum was filmed by government television's Channel 14, thanks to the City of Coos Bay, so tune in if you were unable to attend this morning's event.

CITY MANAGER ANNOUNCES BAY AREA TELECOMMUNICATIONS WEEK – At this morning's Chamber Forum, city manager Bill Grile announced that the week of January 25th will be "Bay Area Telecommunications Week." Watch for details, but in short, the week will include three main events. Day one on January 25th will see local elected leadership gathering for a breakfast to learn about and explore the significance of fiber-optic cable soon to be available in the Bay Area. Day two on January 26th will include a pair of workshops at Southwestern – one dealing with successful Internet business models and the other delving into the details of successful Internet marketing and sales techniques. Day three on January 26th will feature speakers sharing personal success stories about how telecommunications have been used to create profits and employment. Again, details will follow.

HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY – The Fire Department would like to remind everyone to exercise fire safety during the holidays. Make sure your tree is fresh and set up away from heat sources. Never light or burn candles in or around your tree. Trees should have a fresh cut end and be sure to check the water level every day. Inspect your lights for frayed or broken wires before they go up and replace as necessary - it is not worth the risk! Your fire department wishes you a safe and happy holiday season!

CITY OFFICES CLOSE FOR HOLIDAY – City Hall offices, with the exception of the Fire and Police Departments will be closed December 23rd and 24th for the Christmas Holiday and December 31st for New Year's Eve. The Library will be closed from December 23rd through 26th and December 31st through January 1st. The City Council and Staff wish you and your family a safe and healthy holiday. The Friday Update will not be published next week.

PROPOSED SOUTH WEST AREA COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION – In order to encourage greater local participation in the project development process the Oregon Transportation Commission is considering forming an "area commission on transportation". Approval of the proposal would create the South West Area Commission on Transportation (SWACT) for the Douglas, Coos, and Curry Counties. The purpose of the proposed Commission would be to

- Provide a forum for local governments and the private sector to coordinate transportation issues;
- Review the process for determining transportation infrastructure, capital, and project prioritization in the South West area;

- Recommend priorities for state transportation infrastructure and capital investments;
- Advocate and advise the Oregon Transportation Commission on state and regional policies affecting South West Oregon's transportation system.

COOS ART MUSEUM FUND RAISER A SUCCESS – Over \$20,000 was raised from the Coos Art Museum's Millennium Celebration. "This year's fund raiser was very well received by those in attendance," said Helen Scully, museum administrator. "The art, gift and entertainment packages earned us over \$16,000 alone and we are very grateful to all those persons who so generously donated to the fund raiser." The administrator added, "I also especially want to thank the many volunteers who helped make our event so successful, including the Dance Umbrella performers who served food throughout the evening, the volunteers responsible for the magnificent table settings and decorations, and Roger Scott of Ah Ha Video Productions who designed and set up the huge video display."

Lending his praise for the donations to the auction, Museum Board Director Phil Davison noted that "plans are already being discussed for next year's fund raising events, including our very popular flea market and antiques road show held earlier this year at the museum." Davidson said the show is being moved to the North Bend Community Center in 2000 to provide more room for table set-ups and the hundreds of visitors expected to attend. "Last year we drew a big cross section of people and there were lines forming before we opened the doors," said Davison. He added, "Our 2000 flea market promises to be filled with many attractive items and," he said, "we will also provide appraisals at reasonable costs to people who bring their antiques and/or collectibles for this purpose."

ENHANCED 9-1-1 COMES TO NORTH COOS COUNTY – On December 14, 1999 the Enhanced 9-1-1 System was activated in North Coos County. General Telephone employees were busy this week installing the new equipment at the North Coos County 9-1-1 Center at Coos Bay City Hall. The installation followed a period of testing and training on the new system by the 9-1-1 telecommunicators. GTE staff has remained on site this week to assist staff in using the new system.

NORTH COOS COUNTY 9-1-1 OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULED – The North Coos County 9-1-1 center will sponsor an open house on Sunday, December 19th from 1 til 5 p.m. at the Coos Bay City Hall. The open house is designed to provide information to the public and interested persons about the new system. Refreshments will be served. For information call the Communications Supervisor, Tia Akers at 269-8911.

BROWNFIELDS CONFERENCE – Community Services Director Bill Finney, traveling on a scholarship provided by the International City/County Managers Association, spent five days last week in Dallas, Texas attending a national conference on environmental clean-up issues at Brownfield sites. Brownfields are properties currently or formerly in industrial or commercial use that may contain residual environmental contamination. The conference focused on how assessments are made of that possible residual contamination and, if found, how the clean-up is accomplished. The City of Coos Bay was one of only fifty-nine cities nationally selected this year by the federal Environmental Protection Agency to receive a "Brownfields Pilot Demonstration Grant" of \$200,000 to conduct preliminary environmental assessments in the Front Street Redevelopment Project area. The state's Department of Economic and Community Development and their local Regional Officer Chris Claflin provided material assistance in securing the grant for the city.

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DISCUSSION – U.S. Senator Ron Wyden organized and chaired a day-long conference in Eugene on Wednesday of this week to discuss rural development issues in areas of transportation, water and wastewater and telecommunications. Mayor Joanne Verger, City Manager Bill Grile and Community Services Director Bill Finney represented the City of Coos Bay. Discussion at the day-long conference focused on what needs to occur to insure that rural areas are full participants in the rapidly evolving and changing area of high speed Internet access. This capability has enormous economic development potential for rural Oregon; the recently formed South Coast Fiber Consortium is very well

positioned to capitalize on this potential. Coos Bay City Councilor Don Spangler serves as the Vice-Chair of the South Coast Consortium.

PUBLIC HANGING AT COOS ART MUSEUM – Artists from around Oregon are invited to submit up to three pieces of artworks for display in the Coos Art Museum's biennial Public Hanging exhibit, to be held January 4th through March 4th. Entry forms were mailed to several hundred artists recently. The exhibit provides Oregon artists with an opportunity to show their works without having to go through a jury system. However, final selection and hanging of submitted works will be at the discretion of the Exhibit Committee. Any artist may submit three works, none of which exceed 48" and only one sculpture less than 75 pounds may be entered. Only original art work done within the last two years is eligible and no commercial art work will be accepted. Works will be accepted in the following categories: painting, prints, photographs, small sculptures, mixed media, and fiber and/or textiles which can be hung. Jewelry, furniture, leaded stained glass and wearable art are not being accepted for display. All works must be submitted to the museum January 11th, 1 to 4 p.m. or January 12th, 1 to 4 p.m. Handling fees of \$10 for the first art piece, and \$8 each for the second and third work of art are required. Other specific requirements are listed on the entry form, available at the museum offices at 235 Anderson Avenue in Coos Bay. For more information call 267-3901.