



The Friday Update

Bringing you a summary of weekly news from City Hall

December 20, 2002

City of Coos Bay

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FUND RAISER FOR FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL – North Bend Lanes will hold Cosmic Bowling from 4:00 p.m. until 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 30th. Customers may pay whatever amount they want to bowl and the proceeds will be sent to the memorial fund.

CITY HALL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY – City Hall administrative offices and the Library will be closed December 24th and 25th for the Christmas holiday.

MARSHFIELD PARKING DISTRICT APPROVED - At its December 3 meeting, the City Council approved the resolution creating a residential parking district on portions of 11th St., 7th St. and Hall St. near Marshfield High School. Signs will go up in early January limiting parking during school hours to residential parking with permits. Permit applications will be sent to area residents in the next week. There is no charge for the permits. The intent of the program is to reserve streetside parking for the residents in the area and encourage students to use on-campus parking. If you have any questions, please contact Community Services at 269-8918.

THANK YOU VERENA MATTHEWS - The Planning Commission expressed their gratitude and bade their farewells to Verena Matthews at the commission hearing on Tuesday. Verena has served on the Planning Commission for 12 years and has decided to take some time off to pursue other endeavors. We thank Verena for her years of service to the city. We will miss her experience and willingness to participate. Mayor Benetti will present Verena with a myrtlewood plaque at the January 7th City Council meeting in appreciation of her 12 years of service on the Planning Commission.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FROM THE SOUTH COAST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OFFICE – SCDC retreats generate new directions for public-private economic development partnership Officers and Directors of the South Coast Development Council (SCDC) convened for two half-day retreat sessions recently to reassess the organization's missions, priorities and progress. SCDC, the South Coast's only regional public-private economic development entity, was incorporated in October of 2001. The SCDC is governed by a volunteer board of directors presided over by an elected Chairman of the Board. SCDC's current chairman is Ron Opitz, a projects consultant for Northwest Natural. "SCDC is a great example of a public-private partnership," Opitz says. "When SCDC was first chartered, the founders of the organization committed to a process of self-examination and course adjustment, if necessary. That's what these sessions were about," he says. "We felt a responsibility to re-examine our structure and priorities at approximately half-way through our first three years of funding."

Jeff McKeown, Coos Bay stockbroker and City Councilman, was SCDC's first Chairman. "Assessments of this sort are normal, after a new organization has a year or so under its belt," McKeown says. "We have a responsibility to Oregon, Coos and Douglas County taxpayers to examine, and if need be, modify our missions and strategies to maximize return on the investment that is the SCDC. We looked at our successes as well as our shortcomings," he says "which enabled us to create a refined direction for the organization and its president, Melinda Anderson." Retreat discussions were facilitated by Bay Area executive recruiter Marcia Hart.

John Sweet, with Sause Bros. Ocean Towing and SCDC Chairman in 2001, offers praise for SCDC's accomplishments to date. "We reviewed some of our successes, including assistance to Douglas County resulting in the location of the American Bridge company in Reedsport and generating, maintaining and pursuing a list of business relocation prospects for Coos County," Sweet says. "Melinda has worked hard to cultivate those leads and during the retreat the Board of Directors recognized what the directors and officers need to do to support her in her efforts." Jon Barton, Commissioner for the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay believes provincial attitudes have been an impediment to economic improvement in Coos County.

"There's been too much 'turfism' among various groups and agencies that have a stake in the recovery and enhancement of the local economy. If we want that to stop, the SCDC must set the most positive example of cooperation and facilitation."

SCDC's original funding strategy as crafted by the founding committee was well-intentioned," says director Steven Kridelbaugh, president of Southwestern Oregon Community College. "However, it struck many as exclusive rather than inclusive. We need to come up with a low-cost pathway for involvement and support of the SCDC for business operators and local residents who understand what the benefits of an improved economy would mean to everyone," he says. "The concept of serving a 'concierge' function for economic development was part of the SCDC's original mission," says SCDC director Greg Stevens, president and publisher of The World daily newspaper, representing regional Media on the board. "We decided we can't wait for other groups and agencies to become more open and cooperative. The SCDC must talk to each such group and agency and say 'here's how we understand your mission,' then let them tell us if we have the right picture of what they're trying to accomplish. SCDC needs to ask 'how can we help with that?'"

"The concierge in a big hotel doesn't personally lead the pony rides or the tours of the museum," Stevens says, "but the concierge knows who does and facilitates those experience for the customers." "SCDC can't do it all," adds Chairman Opitz. "It shouldn't position itself as if it believes it can."

Opitz has very positive feelings about the specific results of the retreat. "In our second retreat, we went so far as to simplify and focus SCDC's mission statement, and re-order the organization's priorities," he says. The Mission Statement was shortened to "To improve the region's economy." "Period," adds Chairman Opitz. "Whatever it takes."

"We put the concierge function first in the short list of statements of purpose," says former Chairman John Sweet. "It now says SCDC will 'serve as a central clearinghouse (Concierge) through collaboration with other economic development entities.'"

"Next came the commitment to 'recruit firms to our area that bring in jobs,'" said Opitz. "Proactive recruitment of the region to targeted relocation prospects is one function that was not being performed by any other entity, prior to the SCDC," he says. "It's the proactive activity most citizens expect of us, and will continue to be a top priority for our President."

"In economic development circles, it's common for it to take three years or more for direct results to be produced specifically from the efforts of a new public-private economic development partnership," said Steve Kridelbaugh. Kridelbaugh was active in the formation of the Cowlitz County, Washington (1980) and the Richland County Development Corporation, Richland County, Illinois (1987) and served on both Boards.

"We removed the term 'family wage' from our purpose statement about recruitment," says director Doug Fletcher, representing the group Friends of New and Sustainable Industries (FONSI) on the SCDC Board. "'Family wage' represents different things to different people," Fletcher says. "Besides, the 'family wage' qualifier had us excluding efforts to encourage the relocation of new retail to the region, which would increase shopping options for local residents and add to the tax base," he said. "Aiming so high also put efforts to support the growth of regional tourism beneath our radar."

"It won't be that way in the future," commented Chairman Opitz. Two other revised Statements of Purpose agreed to by the board we're to "work to retain existing businesses and to improve their opportunities for expansion and new job creation," and to "Serve as a regional economic development advocate by promoting the infrastructure necessary for a healthy and diversified economy."

"The latter can mean supporting and facilitating projects as diverse as efforts to improve the image and commercial diversity of the 101 corridor through North Bend and Coos Bay, to supporting the provision of broadband internet to the whole region," Opitz said. "It was so important for this Board to meet, discuss, and refine our mission and activities, said Melinda Anderson, President. I am grateful for their passion and persistence in helping this region to improve its economy. They truly understand how critical it is that we embrace our partners in our work to create new jobs."

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